

B38

MI 19

The interview is continuing, it's now 8.26 and that's taken from my watch. Now you referred to number nine here.

NEILL Yes.

Where you saw, heard bottles break or one bottle break or saw a person with a bottle, one of whom was running one way, one was running the other.

NEILL Aha.

And the one who was running up towards.

NEILL Up towards Market Street.

You believe to be Hamill.

NEILL Yes and I didn't believe it at that time, it was after, it was actually whenever Hamill was actually lying there, I went over.

Found lying there.

NEILL And then I realised, I remember seeing a bottle being smashed there and one fella running down and the other fella running up, so I.

Was that anything to do with description or clothing that, that would have made up your mind or help you to.

NEILL No it was just that sort of.

Just an assumption.

NEILL Yeah. It was just an assumption of mine.

Rather than anything else.

NEILL Aha.

OK. Now you're down at the landrover here as you say.

NEILL Yes.

Number eight. Are you aware where the rest of your party are at this stage.

NEILL Ah they were in the middle, by this stage the fight had spread right across the street near enough you know it was certainly on to the, this. This side of the road, Woodhouse Street side of Market Street.

Right.

NEILL Ah but he.

Have you any idea where specifically each were at this stage, each was.

NEILL I couldn't honestly say where they were at, no I couldn't.

Right now you're back at the landrover, you see this here at number nine, what to the best of your knowledge did you do after that there.

NEILL The best I can remember ah can I refer to my statement here just.

Yeah, yeah.

NEILL I believe I possibly went to help R/Con Atkinson.

Yeah.

NEILL Ah who was in the middle of a fight trying to separate a fight up, at I think it was possibly in and around this area.

You're indicating, would you.

NEILL In and around there.

Mark that just. Mark that. Ten.

NEILL Right ten.

Yeah. But in essence you're saying that you did not remain at point eight.

NEILL No, no, no, no.

That or rather we'll put it another way, are you telling me you remained at point eight for any length of time.

NEILL No I didn't, I remained there, the bottle was smashed on the landrover at the same time I was trying to I was, I was talking with the fella that I had brought back to the landrover.

Ehm.

NEILL But at the same time as far as I can R/Con Atkinson was in the middle of a fracas in the middle of the street at ten there.

Ehm.

NEILL And I'm not too sure where P40 was, he had, he was maybe further up I couldn't honestly say.

OK. So.

NEILL But I went to assist R/Con Atkinson.

OK.

NEILL At that stage.

The bottle hit here, can you remember when the bottle hit you, did you say anything to yourself, did you take cover, did you duck, did you say, oh crikey we're going to get a doing or things are not good here.

NEILL No just we're, my main concern was for my colleagues.

Yeah.

NEILL I just. That was mainly why, this was as if, that's why I looked out for Robbie and I was looking for P40 as well but I can't say that I saw P40 at that stage.

So then you moved towards the centre of the road.

NEILL Yes.

Towards the centre of the fracas again.

NEILL Ehm.

Or one particular, another fight.

NEILL One. Yeah.

What happened after that. Or at that time.

NEILL I couldn't honestly say I was, at some stage I became aware of the person, Hamill, lying on the road.

So is it some stage after this.

NEILL I believe so.

That you became aware of the two people on the road.

NEILL Yes.

OK now let's just stop there for a second, how long would it have taken for you, for that to have happened, for you to get from,

not to get from there but the time span from initially here from the person ran to you to the door to you got to here and, and realised that there were two people lying on the road.

NEILL I couldn't say. Couldn't say I mean I haven't got, I haven't been able to put anything in order so I couldn't say exactly how long it was like it seemed like fifteen minutes or half an hour before anybody got there.

Ehm.

NEILL You know.

But are you telling me you were active, you were active.

NEILL I never stopped.

You were active.

NEILL I never stopped.

During all that time.

NEILL Yes.

You never stopped. What did you, you were running from one place to another.

NEILL You were just running from one place to another I mean between trying to split the fight up, there was that fella that I'd taken down Woodhouse Street; he kept on coming back up and he was trying to pick fights so I kept on having to drag him out of the way, there was two women shouting their heads off in the middle of the town as well and that was before even either of the persons were lying in the street, there was some more people, as far as I know there was still more people coming up from the, the bottom of the town you know as well, you know it was just, you're talking maybe, by that stage there was maybe seventy or eighty people there.

Ehm.

NEILL Rather than the forty, fifty that might have, that were there at the start.

Yeah.

NEILL There was maybe more than that I couldn't honestly say.

OK you've told us then that you were constantly moving from one spot up to

another.

NEILL Aha.

Right and then you're aware of two people lying on the road.

NEILL Yes.

And then what transpired after that.

NEILL Right whenever I became aware of the two people lying which, which is marked.

And just for the purpose of the tape.

NEILL It is marked there.

You've, marked two locations there or you indicated two locations on the 10th of June '97 when on the reconstruction.

NEILL That's right.

Both in the area of the junction of Thomas Street to Market Street. Market Street could you indicate then for the purpose here, if you knew which one or who was who if you know what I mean.

NEILL No I, I didn't know, whenever I saw them down on the ground I didn't know who was who and I simply went over and made sure they were still breathing to start with and just checked their vital signs, at the same time there was still, the fighting was still going on right round us, the first one.

And you're now, you're indicating the first one there.

NEILL OK I'll mark this eleven, that would, that was D

You, believe that to be D can you remember what he was wearing.

NEILL No.

Or what, how he was dressed, no.

NEILL No.

OK.

NEILL He was he appeared to be unconscious but was breathing normally he was, as far as I can remember he was lying, he was on his side in a similar position to a recovery position.

Right. Were there any, was there anyone with him.

NEILL

There was two, as far as I can remember there was two women running around shouting, just shouting and screaming, mainly at us, that we weren't doing anything.

Ehm.

NEILL

But at the time we, there was nothing we could do.

But is that right, were you not doing anything or were you, were you running round trying to stop fights and were you, had the whole thing stopped at this stage when they said you were doing nothing.

NEILL

No everything, the fighting was going right across the, the first time, whenever they got us out of the landrover there was nothing that, the only, the only thing that was happening then was there was cat calling going on, I mean as those people came down Thomas Street the, and the ones were walking up High Street I've never, the, they were shouting things you know that we had never, we'd never heard that you know, sorry, they were saying that we just sat there and listened to the, what was going on, but I've never seen a fight start where people are shouting and banging at each other, I mean they start a fight, they go in and they just start thumping each other, the shouting and yo hoing comes after that so I mean, we hadn't, we hadn't heard the fight going on to start with, it was only whenever the people came over to the landrover and said, come on, you're sitting there doing nothing, it was after that after the, the fight started up again that you realised what they were talking about, they, they'd actually, there had been, there must have been somebody assaulted as they came down Woodhouse or came down Thomas Street.

So you're saying there was a fight initially and what you're saying is these two men must have been lying here from the very outset.

NEILL

No, no.

Let's start again, what are you saying then, you're saying number one that because the cat calling and that had started.

NEILL

Aha.

There had been a fight.

NEILL Yes I believe there, there had been, there had been, some, a fight.

Previously.

NEILL Previously, previous to that yes.

The fight had then stopped, the cat calling started.

NEILL Yes.

And then the fight started again.

NEILL The, the real fight started.

The real fight started as it were.

NEILL Yes.

Ah, yeah.

NEILL And that's, I believe, these two persons, well those two people were not lying there when we got out of the landrover the first time. They were injured and I believe that the fella, Hamill, which I've marked as nine, I believe that was as a result of him possibly charging up towards that other boy that was coming down with the bottle and everything you know.

And you said he came down and went to pick a piece of glass or something.

NEILL Yes.

You said that.

NEILL That's, I believe that was Hamill and I believe that's when, there was nobody lying there in the middle of the street whenever we got out of the landrover.

But you have no other grounds for saying that was Hamill.

NEILL No, I believe it was Hamill you know that's just my own.

Well what makes you say it was Hamill apart from the fact that he was lying there.

NEILL Well there'd been, there was a bottle smashed, he was lying in the middle of where the bottle was smashed you know.

Yeah OK well, yeah.

NEILL I said to. It's just the way, the, the thing was brought back to me, I mean I've maybe talked myself into the fact that was actually who that is, but I mean that's.

That's as you saw it.

NEILL That's as I saw it.

And as you see it today.

NEILL Yeah.

And you. OK. Can you remember what clothing he was wearing at all.

NEILL No I couldn't.

Right.

NEILL I couldn't, remember even seeing, you know he wasn't one of the ones that came over to us shouting there and start something.

Now this conversation started with a question, I think, what were the ladies doing or was there a woman looking after or ladies looking after this particular person here.

NEILL There was two women as far as I can remember there was two women, one, they were both shouting and trying to look after these.

They were running between both.

NEILL They were running between both of them.

But did you see one of them specifically with either of the two men, offering.

NEILL I couldn't.

First aid or offering help or offering.

NEILL They were, they were.

Any.

NEILL They were between the two bodies, I couldn't say who was, I didn't take time to try and get any sort of description of either of the women they were going between the bodies the two bodies that were lying on the ground.

Well were they offering assistance.

NEILL Oh they were, they were, to them.
What.

NEILL They weren't to us, I mean there was.
Oh I realise that. What form of assistance were they offering to the people on the ground, the injured people.

NEILL Well they were, they were bent, they were down on the ground beside them, I don't know whether it was their girlfriends or wives or whatever I don't know but I mean it, they were sort of.
Were they cradling them or were they.

NEILL No, no.
Can you remember speaking to any of these ladies. Did you speak to any of them.

NEILL Well they were, they, at this stage they were shouting for ambulances.
Ehm.

NEILL And as far as I know R/Con Cornett was trying to get ambulances.
She was still at the landrover.

NEILL She, was, I don't honestly know where she was I believe she was still about the landrover. It was, somewhere in and about this, it started this time that the other police started arriving.
Right. May I just point this bit out to you here, just by way of explanation, this was not the same person who was lying on the ground, now I'm not quite sure in what context that's meant there.

NEILL Right the, the person I'm referring to there in his early twenties would have been the person running down, coming down.
From the church.

NEILL Market Street from the church towards Thomas Street.
Yeah.

NEILL And he was not the person that was lying on the ground in the middle of the glass.

You're saying the person who was lying on the ground was the person who was running up the street.

NEILL Aha was running from Thomas Street up towards it yes.

Yeah, straight up towards it, yes, OK. Now you refer to, at what stage did you call for an ambulance or, ask someone to call for an ambulance whatever.

NEILL Well I hadn't, I didn't have a radio.

Ehm.

NEILL Denise had the radio and I'm not too sure whether any of the other had, either P40 or Atkinson had radios but she was the one, she R/Con Cornett was the, the main one for the radio, because I mean we were trying to split the fights up and everything else.

Yes that's,

NEILL So I had heard them shouting about an ambulance and I'd heard that an ambulance was coming.

Ehm.

NEILL But ah (inaudible)

Now during this time the fighting, was it still taking place.

NEILL Yes.

OK. And you, can you remember what you were doing then. Were you still trying to stop fights.

NEILL Just you were, yeah, I was trying to stop fights at the same time there was, there were the Protestants were coming down to the two people that were lying in the, in the street.

Ehm.

NEILL And when we were beside the body beside the two fellas, that's Hamill and D and they were getting verbal abuse.

The two ladies.

NEILL Yes they were getting verbal abuse as well as the, the two fellas that were lying on the ground.

Yeah.

NEILL They were getting abuse. And I was trying to keep them back and it was about that stage that the fella with the goatee beard.

The goatee beard.

NEILL Yes he's identified as.

You, you identified him.

NEILL Mark Hamill.

Hobson.

NEILL Hobson, Hobson.

Aha.

NEILL Mark Hobson. I believe that I saw him kick Hamill or the person that was lying at nine, which I believe is Hamill.

Aha.

NEILL In the head, it was not, it wasn't, he didn't jump on his head or, it was just a straight.

A straight kick.

NEILL Straight kick.

Well what did you.

NEILL And at that, I had already been over to Hamill and he was, his breathing was really rasping.

Well what do you mean by rasping now.

NEILL It was going, it was like, it was nearly the death rattle you know the last (intake of breath) it was.

As if he couldn't breath.

NEILL As if he, as if, actually he wasn't breathing through his mouth as if it was somewhere else.

Yeah.

NEILL And he was lying in this puddle of, of something, with glass all round it, whenever I first went over to him I thought it was blood.

Ehm.

NEILL

And I checked, I was looking round to see if he had been stabbed and that's when I realised it was the bottle had been smashed, that I had seen the bottle being smashed and this fella running up. So I put two and two together and said that that was the boy running up from Thomas Street towards the church and had met the other boy coming down.

OK now let, let's just go back to the rasping for a second.

NEILL

Aha.

Because rasping suggests that there may have been something stuck in his throat or whatever.

NEILL

Well I, I believe that he, you know that he had been, the bottle had been stuck in him somewhere and that he was breathing other, somewhere else and that I checked his mouth and.

So you're saying he wasn't breathing through his nose.

NEILL

No I, I'm saying that it sounded as if it was you know, it had been cut, he had been stuck in the throat or something else you know it was, I'd never heard a noise like it.

Ehm.

NEILL

So I immediately checked him, all that I saw was that he was lying in this pool of stuff and I didn't realise at that time was, alcohol or some sort of water or whatever it was, I don't know.

Ehm.

NEILL

I checked it, moved him over and checked him, there was no blood coming from him and everything else, I checked his mouth he was, you know he was breathing, although he was breathing it was the weirdest noise and.

Was there anybody with him at that stage.

NEILL

No, not at that, not whenever I was over with him at that stage but I mean the two women were running up and down.

Aha. What, exactly did you do again.

You said you treated him, you checked his mouth.

NEILL

Oh I checked his, I checked his throat because he, because of the noise, I also checked, I thought he had actually been stabbed or something like that there.

NEILL

Ehm.

It was the way the, the air was coming in and out of him like it just.

NEILL

How did, how did this lad kick him, if you were in the vicinity and where were the rest of the police at this stage.

The rest of the police, there is still only three of us there.

NEILL

Ehm.

Only the three of us.

But were the other police still trying to deal with the fights that were.

NEILL

They're, I, I don't know where, where everybody was I can't, I couldn't tell you.

NEILL

No, no, no I'm not.

You know. I couldn't say, I wouldn't, I can't even, I could hardly even say where I was.

NEILL

How far away were you from say Hamill as you've identified him when the lad with the goatee beard kicked him.

I couldn't honestly say, I wasn't that far away from him I couldn't honestly say how far away at the same time.

NEILL

Ehm.

I was close enough that I was able to identify him.

NEILL

Yeah.

Like it's.

NEILL

Another, and the question I'm asking really is, could you have prevented it.

At the same time, no.

Ehm.

NEILL But at the same time he was already down on the ground and he had already, I don't know what had happened to him.

Ehm.

NEILL But the, there was a brave more bit more happened to him than he kicked him, he wasn't, he did, it wasn't as if he really, it was a, what was it. Oh I don't know, it wasn't a you know really vicious kick, he kicked him but it wasn't as, as vicious as you would, you know somebody may have done.

Right when you saw him kicking did you try to apprehend him, did you try to arrest him sorry or

NEILL There's, there's no way I could have been able to.

Right.

NEILL With the number of people there it was.

Ehm.

NEILL I couldn't have done anything.

Yeah but you were sufficiently aware of who, of the identification.

NEILL Yes oh aye.

You would be able to pick him out in an identification parade.

NEILL Yes, yes, he was, he was also involved, he was also involved in a fight with Reserve Constable Atkinson and I believe that's when, he particularly struck, struck him with the baton.

Ehm. You struck this boy with a baton.

NEILL Yes I believe it was on the leg.

Where.

NEILL It was just the angle that he was at.

Was this after, this was after he had kicked Hamill or was this.

NEILL Yes this was after it, aye.

Right, so the fight was still going on, the fight.

NEILL There was still fights going on oh aye.

Right from there in I was just wondering is there anything that you want to say in particular with regard to the allegation that you and your colleagues did not do all in your power to prevent these assaults, these fights, these attacks on those there.

NEILL There was only, well as you know there was only the four of us there and we did everything we possibly could, there's nothing, there was nothing we could, that we could have done any more than what we had done.

Very good.

NEILL There's nothing, absolutely nothing I mean you're talking about the sheer numbers of people between trying to, between worrying about your, myself never mind my colleagues, my colleagues I was putting my colleagues before myself and the fact that you have a gun you're in the middle of a situation where.

Did anybody strike you.

NEILL Neither side likes you.

Oh yes, did anyone strike you or did anyone try to attack you.

NEILL I couldn't honestly, I couldn't honestly say.

You received no injuries in consequence of.

NEILL No, no physical injury.

No physical injury, right, that's OK, that's alright, sorry there are one or two points there. Just there's a couple of points that I want to clear up, this is coming from a number of other statements and, and just to clear up from your point of view, did the, police woman Denise Cornett get out of the vehicle to talk to the two persons, one that, Bridgett.

NEILL Bridgett and the other fella.

Aha, early on.

NEILL No.

Did you grab hold of a person in the group that was kicking Robert Hamill, this person was described as wearing a Rangers' scarf.

NEILL Ehm, no.

NEILL No A I think she, it could have been.

That's right.

NEILL She had somebody with a Rangers' scarf.

That's OK.

NEILL And I was up with her but.

Who was that. But you.

NEILL I know his name and I just.

Lunt.

NEILL Yes.

OK.

NEILL It was Lunt.

Righto.

NEILL But I didn't realise who it was at that stage.

But you didn't.

NEILL Because he had this scarf up round his face and all.

You didn't grab hold of this person while he was kicking Robert Hamill.

NEILL I didn't see him, I didn't see him near Robert Hamill, the first time I saw him he was further up the street, where would that have been, ah it would actually have been up about there.

Do you want to mark that there.

NEILL But what's that eleven, twelve.

Aha.

NEILL That was up there.

And when did you see him or what was that.

NEILL Well I mean A had arrived with.

Other.

NEILL Constable Orr I think.

Aha.

NEILL And right, I think, I believe they came in through the other way or something I don't know how but their car was up here somewhere.

Right.

NEILL And also I had to get, made our way back up and picked on that fella and I, I think he had smashed the bottle over the roof of the police car.

Right.

NEILL But I couldn't honestly say.

OK a female alleges after Robert Hamill was injured she ran to a landrover and asked them to get help did, did this female speak to you personally or can you remember.

NEILL The fella came over to the landrover and pulled me out.

Yeah. A female, sorry a female, can you remember.

NEILL No it was a male.

A male, that's.

NEILL There was a female there.

Aha.

NEILL Cert, there was a female there you know in and about that area.

Aha.

NEILL And she was shouting at us too.

Aha.

NEILL But I mean the fella was actually pulling me out of the landrover.

But she, was she saying about getting help or at that stage or.

NEILL No, not at that, I don't believe so, not at that stage.

Right.

NEILL She was, there was just you're sitting there watching this happening and doing nothing.

Aha.

NEILL That, that was the first things that.

Aha.

NEILL They said to us like you know it just sort of continued like that.

OK.

NEILL 'Til that fight sort of started then.

P40 in his account in general terms will, would suggest that youse were speaking to, Bridgett and Forbes and then this person come across the landrover.

NEILL No, that's why we were stopped at LR2 the fella walked across from Thomas Street, he walked across the road in front of us actually and we had moved on slightly.

Aha.

NEILL He had said something as he walked across, in front of us, we stopped there but she was just past and Denise Cornett opened the door and said, what did you say.

Aha.

NEILL And then these pair, these, well those pair were Bridgett and Forbes.

Aha.

NEILL They had actually, they were coming from the Coach, I mean some of the Coach ones had passed on that side but this, these were the only two.

Right.

NEILL On this side of the road, on our side of the road, outside the Halifax and that.

OK.

NEILL What I'm saying they, they came up after we were originally stopped.

Right P40 also alleges that approximately twenty five persons were walking from the direction of Wellworth Shop in the direction of Church Street and he heard shouting coming from the direction of

Thomas Street he brought your attention or he said something to that effect to you, can you recall that. This was in the landrover.

NEILL No. There was more, there was certainly more than twenty five people coming up from Boss Hoggs, up, up from High Street.

Right, can you remember him having any conversation with you in the landrover.

NEILL No.

OK. Just to, now I just want to go through.

NEILL Not, not certainly not in relation to that there.

Right there have been six persons charged in. Six persons charged in relation to, this incident we've got Lunt, Forbes, Bridgett, Robinson, Hanvey and Hobson.

NEILL Aha.

You, you identified Hobson so you did.

NEILL Yes.

You, you in your statement you mentioned Robinson.

NEILL Ah Rory Robinson.

Rory Robinson.

NEILL Aha.

And Bridgett, you mentioned Bridgett.

NEILL Yes.

And the person beside him, Forbes.

NEILL Yeah.

And Lunt is the person with the Rangers' scarf.

NEILL Yes.

Now do you know Hanvey at all.

NEILL Gingery haired. Ginger haired fella.

Right, yes, aha.

NEILL Skinny, sort of.

Aha.

NEILL Long, gaunt face.

Aha.

NEILL Aha.

Did you see him there that night.

NEILL No.

Righto. You didn't speak to him at any stage.

NEILL No I didn't speak to him at all.

OK.

No I saw him, I saw him later on, after, whenever we started moving them all back from the actual junction.

Aha.

NEILL I saw him further back up the street.

Right them people that I mention, did you see them besides what you, you've described as Hobson playing an active part in this assault, did you see any of them other persons play an active part.

NEILL No I didn't.

COMMISSION A couple of mundane points and then that'll, we'll call it a day, is that a diesel landrover.

NEILL No.

COMMISSION Or petrol.

NEILL Petrol.

COMMISSION Was the engine running, on at the time while you were sitting at point LR3, 2 and 1.

NEILL Ah.

COMMISSION You'd never switched the engine off.

NEILL Well not, not at LR2 because we were moving down the road and, and we were also moving at LR3 so.

COMMISSION The engine was on all the time.

NEILL Yes.

COMMISSION How difficult is it to see here whatever. Is it.

NEILL It is yes, it's quite difficult.
Ehm. Was the heater on.

NEILL Seeing, seeing behind you, you see the angle of the landrover towards the junction between it and the angle that I was sitting at in the, in the landrover here.

COMMISSION As a matter of interest, sitting in a landrover with the engine on, but the doors were open in this instance.

NEILL One door was open.

COMMISSION You. One door. You can clearly hear people shouting and yelling going up the street is that right.

NEILL Yeah well you can, you, I mean as, it's a Saturday night, they're coming back from the Coach, most of them were drunk and you know there's shouting and yo hoing from them all.
Yeah now as a policeman.

NEILL Aha.
Would it have been wise at that stage to get out and try and quieten them down, or is it better to let them go home.

NEILL Well they, most, most of the time they just go home you know, you just let them, some of them come over and speak to you, most of them just go on up the road.
Shouting and acting the wag.

NEILL Shout, shouting, acting the wag, they're not that much like, it's not as if they're screaming their heads off at.
Well have, have you had the experience now of getting out and stopping ah people like that and saying, look gentlemen, that's it ladies, enough, too much shouting.

NEILL Yeah.
Play it cool.

NEILL Aha.
What do you think would be the result.

NEILL You wouldn't get any respect from them anyway I'll tell you that much, you'd just that's, that's how you start a fight with them.

Well that's the point I'm making.

NEILL Because, because this is our town and we own it.

Aha.

NEILL And it's the same you know, we don't like Catholics walking through our town, let us through.

And that may also apply to, to police as well I suppose.

NEILL Yeah well especially with Drumcree, I mean that wasn't, that was before Drumcree but they're still talking about Drumcree, they still talk about '85 for God sake in Portadown.

Ehm, right.

COMMISSION '85.

NEILL '85. '86.

What it could have been. I have to be careful what I was going to say. Now will we stop for a few moments.

COMMISSION Right.

OK the, we've now finished this interview with you this is the form, the PACE 21 that I told you that you would have at the end of the interview. Before I switch off the, the tape recorder, do you wish to clarify anything you've said, do you wish to add anything or do you wish to make a written statement regarding what we've spoken. Alan I wonder if I could ask you something just before we switch off the tape now you had three Reserve men with you, was it Reserve Constables that night.

NEILL Yes.

In relation to the two main Reserve Constables, did you see any hesitation or any dereliction of duty on their part.

NEILL No, I didn't.

Are you satisfied with their performance.

NEILL I'm satisfied with all of the performances, I couldn't have asked more of any of them.

Thanks. Woman Constable what did she do, what was her role.

NEILL Well she, she was at the, well she was at the landrover, but she, I mean she was on the radio trying to get the assistance and everything else, I couldn't honestly say all what she did.

But you were happy with the way she was

NEILL I was happy yes, yes.

Yes. OK I am now switching off the recorder, the time which again is taken from my watch is 8.58 pm.