

This interview is being tape recorded, the interview is being conducted in an interview room at Lurgan Police Station. I am Detective Inspector Michael Irwin from Portadown RUC. Other police officers present are: Maynard McBurney, Detective Chief Superintendent. Other persons present are.

COMMISSION [REDACTED], Independent Commission for Police Complaints.

SOLICITOR And Sean Hagan, Solicitor, Portadown.

The date is the 9th of September 1997 and the time which is taken from my wrist watch is 8.34 pm. What is your full name.

ATKINSON Robert Cecil Atkinson.

At the conclusion of this interview Robert I will give to you a notice explaining what will happen to the tapes, it's a form PACE 21 OK I've already explained you are here as a voluntary attender and you're about to be interviewed in relation to criminal neglect of duty, assisting offenders and withholding information about an arrestable offence regarding an incident at Portadown town centre on the 27th of April 1997. I'm going to caution you as follows, "you do not have to say anything but I must caution you that if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court it may harm your defence, if you do say anything it may be given in evidence". Do you understand that alright?

ATKINSON I do, yes.

OK and just before we start the interview I just, for the purpose of the tape explain a number of items that are on the table in front of us. And I would say that you have a copy of your statement, notebook entry and baton report form. That's correct.

ATKINSON Yeah.

OK we have three maps, one is a map of the, a close up of the town centre of Portadown at Woodhouse Street and in which a number of locations were marked by yourself and Constable Neill on the 10th of June of this year and on the other side of that map is, is a plan of a police landrover, we have also another map which is just a copy of the previous map that I've explained without the locations marked on it.

ATKINSON Yeah.

And the third map is a general location map of Portadown town centre. We have also two sets of photographs, one set of photographs which relate to views in, taken in Portadown centre, on the 27th of April 1997 and the other one then are views, are photographs taken on the date on which you and Constable Neill replaced the landrover in Portadown town centre. That's it. OK now Robert what I'd ask you first of all there are a number of locations marked on the map, namely LR1, LR2 and LR3, could you explain to us or sorry, if I turn over the map and first I'll go to the landrover, could you indicate on the map where you actually were sitting in the landrover and where the other persons were sitting and if you use that pen.

ATKINSON

Right.

And just mark it.

ATKINSON

Just our initials.

Aye just, just. Put out their name anyway. Put your name, Constable or Reserve Constable so and so. OK for the purpose of the tape you've put A Neill in the driver's seat, Denise Cornett in the passenger seat, P40 behind the driver's seat and R Atkinson behind the passenger seat.

ATKINSON

That's correct.

Now when you write their names particularly yourself and R/Con P40 in that seating area, would that have been your location, that you'd always have been sitting or would that seating area in the back of the landrover, would your seat.

ATKINSON

No up again because the, the back of the driver's seat has a metal frame across it and you can sort of lean against it.

Right so you're saying that you would have been sitting up close behind the passenger seat.

ATKINSON

Yeah, aha.

And R/Con P40.

ATKINSON

Yeah he was there, well as far as I know, well, I think because our legs.

Right.

ATKINSON Are staggered if you know what I mean.
Aha.

ATKINSON He may have been just to my right like but.
Aye further down the landrover.

ATKINSON Yes aha.
Which makes a lot of sense. Now for the purpose of the tape I'm, I'm going to mark this with the identification mark M18. OK now I would ask you then to go, if you could explain LR1, LR2 and LR3 for us.

ATKINSON LR1 was the original point we were parked, where the landrover was parked prior to anything having taken place.
Aha.

ATKINSON LR2 was the second place we moved to ahm and then LR3 was where the landrover finished up.
OK.

ATKINSON When the whole thing then was under way.
Right what duty were you detailed that night.

ATKINSON Public order duty.
And what time did you start that night. Or what time were you on that day.

ATKINSON I think we were detailed four to three.
Four to three.

ATKINSON Aha.
And who briefed you or what were you briefed, you talk, public order duty what, what were you, or who briefed you.

ATKINSON Well I was briefed at four o'clock for the normal turn of duty.
Aha.

ATKINSON And then I think Sergeant **P89** maybe spoke to us before we went out, just the normal thing is public order, the crew takes the landrover to the town centre.
Right.

ATKINSON It didn't specifically say a public order duty Woodhouse Street on the duty sheet, it

just said public order duty, town centre.

Right did he speak to you.

ATKINSON I can't recall but he normally would have yes.

Righto.

ATKINSON What they normally do as soon as you finish your late turn you get a quick cup of tea, get crewed up and get out.

OK and when you describe public order duty, what is public order duty in, to you.

ATKINSON Well it's, it's ah.

In Portadown town centre.

ATKINSON In Portadown town centre public order duty has been, for a long time, trying to keep rival factions apart and generally sorting out the drunks when they get out of pubs and things.

And.

ATKINSON Normally it's, it's to keep the peace in the town centre really.

And you talk about rival factions are you talking Protestant, Catholic.

ATKINSON Yeah.

Is there any particular parts in Portadown that you would be referring to, in particular that would be points where rival factions would come into contact with each other.

ATKINSON Well, well Woodhouse Street would be the favourite spot, maybe not so much at the top of Woodhouse Street, more down Woodhouse Street towards the Royal Oak.

Righto. And what would be happening down there

ATKINSON Well normally you would get a few of the Protestant faction with drink in them and they'd head down, think they're super heros and.

Right.

ATKINSON Make a lot of noise and wreck and tear at kick pub doors and things so.

OK that would be further down Woodhouse Street.

ATKINSON

Yeah.

OK

ATKINSON

In fact the last, the last incident that I was involved in was Christmas Eve when we arrested two boys outside the Royal Oak who were kicking up a row.

Aha. Any other locations within Portadown.

ATKINSON

Ahm Magowan Street or Magowan Buildings car park.

Aha.

ATKINSON

That would be the lower end of Obins Street which is further down, the bottom end of Woodhouse Street. I personally haven't been involved in any real trouble up the town centre as such, this was the first time.

Right and how long had, had you been stationed in Portadown prior.

ATKINSON

Well on ordinary uniform duty a year, about eighteen months and prior to that I have been, I was on escort duties.

Right and how often and I'm only looking for approximate would you do this.

ATKINSON

Right here.

Would you do this type of public order duty.

ATKINSON

Ahm well it normally fell on your late your late week, you know Friday, Saturday lates.

Aha.

ATKINSON

You were detailed on to three o'clock.

And that would have been Friday and Saturday nights would it.

ATKINSON

Ah some of the crew would have been detailed Friday night and some Saturday night.

Right so.

ATKINSON

That would have been the normal thing.

How often would you have done that type of duty.

ATKINSON

Well once a month then really.

You'd have done it once a month.

ATKINSON

Aha.

OK and what was your particular duty on that date when you were located in the back of the vehicle.

ATKINSON

Well I was just vehicle crew.

Vehicle crew.

ATKINSON

I wasn't carrying a rifle or.

OK. To what extent now of the town would you patrol.

ATKINSON

Everything.

On public order duty.

ATKINSON

Everything inside the barriers.

From one end.

ATKINSON

See at night, the barriers close.

From one end of the town to the other, all inside the barrier.

ATKINSON

Yeah.

Right.

ATKINSON

Because you've a pub at, you've a pub at, well Marlborough Street there.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

It, it's fairly late, it runs to one o'clock.

Right. Now the other issue I was going to ask you was, on public order duty is it all vehicular patrol or do you do foot patrols as well.

ATKINSON

Ah.

Which is, which is the better form of combating that particular type of crime.

ATKINSON

Well if you had enough men we would always put a couple of men on beat and a crew to back them up and another vehicle as well.

Aha.

ATKINSON

That particular night there was only the four

of us.

Yeah. Is it a better idea to put men out in vehicles or is it better to put them on foot, in your opinion.

ATKINSON

I think on foot.

Aha.

ATKINSON

With a vehicle, you need a vehicle for protection obviously.

Aha.

ATKINSON

If it gets out of hand there's nowhere to hide like at least if you've a vehicle well if they start stoning you or, like you've something to take cover behind.

Yeah.

ATKINSON

You know a structure to take cover behind.

You said that the last time you were involved in any incident.

ATKINSON

Yes.

On that particular type of duty was Christmas.

ATKINSON

Christmas Eve.

Christmas Eve.

ATKINSON

Yes.

And that was quite a long time like I mean that's, that's almost a period of six months.

ATKINSON

Oh yeah, aha.

From the last incident you might say.

ATKINSON

Yeah.

It doesn't seem to equate that one arrest then with all the duty you've done.

ATKINSON

Aha.

Would give the impression that there is never a great deal of trouble, apart from cat calls, shouting and that sort of thing, is that right or, or is that the wrong impression to get.

ATKINSON

Ahm now when I say, when I say I was involved in one incident, I was talking about one

sectarian type incident, since Christmas I had arrested a boy for criminal damage at the Royal Oak.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

But he was of the Nationalist persuasion.

Aha.

ATKINSON

You know.

And what was he doing there.

ATKINSON

He hammered the front door with an iron bar because the, the owner of the premises wouldn't let him in.

Yeah. Ah the point I'm trying to make is this.

ATKINSON

I know what you're saying sir.

That.

ATKINSON

Ahm I would say on average there would be one or two minor skirmishes a month probably.

Aha minor skirmishes.

ATKINSON

Well when I say minor skirmishes, that would be a couple of boys involved in it, and a quick thump at each other and away or a stone or a bottle thrown.

Aha.

ATKINSON

The most normal thing would, really would be a bottle or two thrown.

And shouting.

ATKINSON

And shouting and keeping them apart really.

Yeah, now I just wanted to cover those points and all first. Let's go back to LR1.

ATKINSON

Yeah.

And tell us exactly, start there, and tell us, why initially you decided to sit there and then possibly move to here and then to here.

ATKINSON

Well.

What was the significance of this movement.

ATKINSON

We had been, I think prior to that we had been in Mandeville Street sir, the normal

thing to do is move about.

Aha.

ATKINSON Just keep an eye generally on things.

Aha.

ATKINSON So that's a good layby, you see a good view of the town in general.

You, OK.

ATKINSON We pulled in there and sat for a while.

In other words you are saying, you see from here a good view of all problems.

ATKINSON Yeah, you can see there's a chip shop down below Wellworths.

Yeah.

ATKINSON Which they congregate at, you can see it from there, you can see if there's any hassle in front of Wellworths, so you've a view of, you've really a view of Thomas Street, the Woodhouse (inaudible) Street, Edward Street plus a wee bit of what's beyond that.

Yeah well why would there be such an interest in, in Thomas Street now.

ATKINSON Well normally.

(inaudible) Woodhouse Street.

ATKINSON Right normally ahm Catholics that are going to Obins Street or Ballyoran or the Nationalist end of town, the Catholic Hall is up Thomas Street.

St Pat's.

ATKINSON And they make their way across, so it's normally to give them a bit of protection as well and ah.

Well do they normally walk down this way.

ATKINSON Be in the general area. Occasionally you get two or three crossing you, not in great numbers.

Why is that.

ATKINSON Ah most of them seem to taxi it.

It's safer really to taxi.

ATKINSON It's safer, there has been trouble in the past as we're all aware.

Aha.

ATKINSON And I suppose it's generally safer for them to.

Yeah. Would you have been aware sitting, sitting here on that particular night that there was a function in St Patrick's.

ATKINSON No sir, no, that's up round the bend.

Aye but OK you wouldn't have been aware, you wouldn't have seen people up there or anything like that.

ATKINSON No.

But would you have been aware that there was a function in the club that night.

ATKINSON Well there would be every Saturday night.

There would be every Saturday night.

ATKINSON Aha.

So you would know that there was a function.

ATKINSON Well really, well anybody on public order duty is aware that the Royal Oaks is open late, the bar as I mention in Monaghan Street, St Patrick's, the Masonic, the Buffs, all the clubs in the town, the rugby club.

Are all up that end.

ATKINSON Are all open sort of fairly late you know on a Saturday night.

Yeah. Well would you be expecting several people to come down this way or would you have been expecting anybody to come down that way.

ATKINSON Ahm I suppose I would be wrong to say you wouldn't be expecting any but not, there's not normally, there's no big volume like you might get one straggler or two and that's about the height of it.

And that would be the normal role.

ATKINSON That's the normal thing.

Yeah.

ATKINSON As I said the biggest problem is, while you

sit there, they would come out of the Queen's Bar.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

A lot of drunks and they get the brave heart on and they get a few drinks in, probably go down Woodhouse Street and paste the Royal Oak.

Aha.

ATKINSON

So when you're sitting there you're sort of watching them as well.

And, and it, point taken it's a good vantage point.

ATKINSON

Aha.

And I can understand exactly why you're sitting here, so you're sitting here and before you move do you see anybody in Thomas Street or anybody in the vicinity.

ATKINSON

There's just a few people knocking about, there's nothing really untoward or anybody boisterous.

OK.

ATKINSON

Or.

OK.

ATKINSON

No bottles or stone or anything like that.

Right so.

ATKINSON

No drunks really.

You move, do you know the move, why you moved from there to here.

ATKINSON

I'm not sure why Alan moved, we had I think we had saw groups of four and fives and sixes coming up the town and we moved to there so that we could just keep an eye down the Woodhouse Street in case there was anybody coming up.

Yes but ordinarily there would be people coming up here at this time anyway.

ATKINSON

Oh aye you see the rugby club gets out and you have the bus coming from the Coach Inn, Banbridge and they'd be fairly boisterous coming up the street.

Yeah the Banbridge crowd.

ATKINSON Yeah.

 The buses.

ATKINSON Aha.

 Yeah.

ATKINSON I think there's only probably one bus.

 Yeah so are you saying that at one stage down
this end of the town was quite quiet.

ATKINSON Oh yes, aha.

 And then the next thing.

ATKINSON Yeah.

 This started up.

ATKINSON At a certain, at a certain time as you can
imagine the rugby club gets out and you have
a mass crowd coming out of it and you have
the Coach bus arriving home, so sort of,
within ten minutes from having no one on the
street you have stragglers in dribs and drabs
and groups, groups of four, groups of three
maybe a group of ten coming up the street.

 Yeah. Would that be coming up both sides or.

ATKINSON Normally, normally the big majority of them
would come up the far side of the street.

 Up this left hand side here.

ATKINSON Yes, aha.

 Up the ah.

ATKINSON Because that chippy be's in that, they
usually go down.

 Boss Hoggs, is that right.

ATKINSON Yes, got an ad, a Cancer Research Campaign up
number seven, home bakery, up that side of
the street.

 Yeah so then you believe possibly that
Constable Neill moved to here so as he could
have a better view of these people coming up.

ATKINSON Yes and also to keep an eye down Woodhouse
Street.

 And to keep an eye down Woodhouse Street.

ATKINSON Yes.

And at this stage did you still see, did you see anyone in Thomas Street, or can you recall seeing anyone.

ATKINSON I don't recall sir, no. I didn't, there was a couple of stragglers maybe coming up along here.

OK.

ATKINSON They weren't causing any.

And when you say coming up here, you mean coming up past the, the junction and coming up past number seven, the home bakery.

ATKINSON Yes.

Coming up to cross.

ATKINSON Really, just to make their way up the town.

Just to make their way up the town.

ATKINSON Yeah.

Up the town, yeah.

ATKINSON They weren't causing any hassle.

So you're sitting here and not a great deal of movement in LR2.

ATKINSON Right.

Now have you any idea why Constable Neill then decided to move to LR3.

ATKINSON Right then we saw two boys then coming along this side.

And you're indicating along the Northern Bank.

ATKINSON Yes.

Halifax side.

ATKINSON Aha. Who are known to us, we know they're not Nationalists so just as a sort of a, a move before they make a move, we pull in there so that we can speak to them and say, carry on your way boys.

So you think that's why he moved there.

ATKINSON Yes.

And did that actually happen.

ATKINSON

It happened yeah.

So you stop here.

ATKINSON

Aha.

You speak to, the, who speaks to these people here and do you know who they were.

ATKINSON

Right, ahm one of them was a boy Stacey Bridgetts I think.

Aha.

ATKINSON

I'm not sure if the second one was Roy Robinson or not I can't, I can't recall but they spoke quite friendly and we had a bit of a chat and the, Denise Cornett opened the door and talked to them.

Right.

ATKINSON

P40 he talked across to one, there was one of them.

This was P40, who's P40 now.

ATKINSON

P40.

P40, he talked to one of them too from the back.

ATKINSON

Yes, he had leaned across and talked out to them, apparently he had went, applied to go to the Army or something.

With him.

ATKINSON

No, no, this lad.

Oh right yeah, yeah.

ATKINSON

He had obviously, I didn't really, I just sort of knew them to see, I hadn't known them to talk to or anything and he obviously had been speaking to this boy that he had been going to the Army or something.

Yeah that's right. And what were you doing at this stage.

ATKINSON

I was just sitting in behind.

Sitting listening.

ATKINSON

Aha.

Yeah. Now.

ATKINSON

I never actually spoke to the boys I just.

Did you at this stage, were you aware of anything else happening in this vicinity here or this vicinity here.

ATKINSON

No, no. No.

Well was there still, were there still people coming.

ATKINSON

There was people coming in dribs and drabs, yes up the street as well like.

OK and.

ATKINSON

It's the normal thing at that time of night for people to come up the town you know.

OK point taken. Ah the next thing here then at LR3 you're speaking to these two people, what happens next.

ATKINSON

Ahm I think they had left, they had just moved off or something and there was, as far as I'm aware the next thing happened then was ah his door was pulled open, Alan's door was pulled open.

Aha. Can I just, before we, we go to that point, can I ask you, can you recall anybody walking across the front of your landrover at any stage, prior.

ATKINSON

Ah there was a couple of, aye there was. There was a stoutish sort of a boy ahm I don't know him like but I think he was, he was probably, obviously from down Obin Street or down that direction.

And did he do anything.

ATKINSON

He said something to he spoke to Denise and said there's people coming down there or something like that and just almost instantly I think the door was pulled open and Alan was pulled out.

Now between him speaking to Denise was Bridgett at the door at this stage or was he talking, were they talking.

ATKINSON

I think they had just moved from the door, they might have been up the side of the landrover somewhere. But she shouted something at them, go on ahead boys, move on or something like that, I'm not sure of the exact words, she told them to get on their way. They were, they were definitely at this

side of the landrover like, here.

And were they there at the, at the time that this man came walking across, can you recall that.

ATKINSON

They couldn't have been too far away you know what I mean they were in, they could have been within ten yards or five yards of them.

Your view would have been blocked at that.

ATKINSON

I couldn't see you see but, I was just sitting like, when you're in the back of the landrover, your main view is out the front, you really can't see unless you're sticking your head in around, you'd it stuck out the passenger door like.

Righto.

ATKINSON

Ah I know she told them to head on and he, he did say something 'til her about there's people coming there and she said, right that's dead on.

Right and did you take anything from him saying that.

ATKINSON

Well I assumed that there was people coming down Thomas Street you know.

From St Pat's.

ATKINSON

Aha.

OK. So sorry the next thing then as we go on from that somebody opened the door.

ATKINSON

Yes.

And what transpired then.

ATKINSON

I, I saw him disappearing out like as if he had been pulled out and I jumped out and run round to see what was going on and this boy was having a bit of an altercation with him.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

And seemed to be wrestling a bit with each other, more or less and ah then, at that stage I could see there was about, there was various groups on the street, there would have been maybe, I suppose, it was apparent to me then at that stage there was two opposing groups.

Aha.

ATKINSON And there would have been I suppose thirty five probably Prod persuasion and about ten the Nationalist and there was a bit of cat calling and things and the next thing, just like that, bang, they all got stuck into each other.

Right now just slow it down, just (inaudible)

ATKINSON Aha.

Now that man, did he say anything to, to you.

ATKINSON The guy that.

Aye or to, to.

ATKINSON The guy that pulled Alan out.

Ehm.

ATKINSON Ah no it happened that quick and I don't recall the, the, my recollection of it was Alan was sitting in the driver's seat and the next thing the door was just burst open and Alan disappeared out through the door.

And you didn't hear anybody say, you sat there and watched that happen.

ATKINSON No.

Ehm.

ATKINSON From him.

Well from him or indeed anyone else.

ATKINSON Right I, I heard that when I got out.

Yes.

ATKINSON When I got out there was girls there.

Aha.

ATKINSON Saying you sat there and watched that happen, this was after the whole row had started.

This was after, long after you got in, out of the landrover.

ATKINSON Well I'd say a few minutes after we were out, after, when I initially got out and went to Alan's aid then and turned round and the row started in the street, it was obvious that there was two or three had got out of their depth in amongst this Prod crowd.

Aha.

ATKINSON And we run as best we could and got them gathered up.

And then what did you do. Let's, just let's slow it down.

ATKINSON Aha.

Show us on the map, and mark on the map there where the different wee fracas or fights were taking place.

ATKINSON Right, right.

If, if you can now.

ATKINSON OK.

If you mark them. Right the first thing was, Alan was here, so you mark that with a, with an X1.

ATKINSON Right X1.

And just initial it.

ATKINSON Right. So when that happened.

And where were you now.

ATKINSON I was in the rear of the landrover.

Yes.

ATKINSON Right when that happened I bounced the doors open and out round to help him.

Right.

ATKINSON Because I thought some boy.

So you're.

ATKINSON Was for pulling the head off him you see.

Yes.

ATKINSON Right, so the next thing happened then was I could see various factions across here.

Now would you indicate, just to, even in an area line or whatever way.

ATKINSON Now when I say they were in groups do you know what I mean.

Aha.

ATKINSON Ahm you might have had four or five and then the next group have been ten and then it could have been three.

But even a general area where them four groups.

ATKINSON Well.

Or three groups were.

ATKINSON Right. Generally about, about there I'd say.

And mark it X2 just and.

ATKINSON There might have been a smaller one here.

Well.

ATKINSON But they were spread right across the street more or less.

Aha, if you just put X2.

ATKINSON Right.

And initial it and then that X3 and your (inaudible)

ATKINSON Right I wouldn't be one hundred percent that there was only three there.

And you're.

ATKINSON They were just spread the whole way across and they were sort of facing up to each other, just like that, out of the blue.

Aha.

ATKINSON And.

Where was the man that initially pulled Constable Neill out of the landrover at this stage.

ATKINSON He was with Constable Neill, Constable Neill had pushed him away and they were having a bit of an argument, now when I saw this.

Do you know what the argument was about.

ATKINSON I didn't sort of pick it up sir you know what I mean but my first reaction was to grab my baton because I knew this here was just erupting.

Right.

ATKINSON This just erupted like, it's hard for me to

put it into time and words to you, just immediately I got out, all of a sudden this thing, there was a few cat calls and the next thing these boys just got stuck into each other here.

Well where was P40 at this stage.

ATKINSON I think he got out along with me now, but I don't know where he went.

Or indeed the woman constable.

ATKINSON Right, she stayed on the radio, she was, she was in the landrover.

Aha. So she, her duty was to remain.

ATKINSON Now her door, her door I think at that stage was probably open but she stayed at the radio, right. When this thing here started I grabbed my baton and ahm Alan he left this boy 'til it and he run because we could see there was two or three boys here getting into difficulties.

Ehm.

ATKINSON So we run up.

Now you're indicating now (inaudible)

ATKINSON Yes so we run up and Alan he grabbed one of the boys who was obviously a Nationalist.

Aha.

ATKINSON Grabbed by these Prods, and we got him out of it and we run him to here, to get him out of the road.

Would you just put that as X4 just.

ATKINSON Right.

Just for the, for the purpose of the tape.

ATKINSON Yeah.

Can you, have you any idea how he was dressed or.

ATKINSON I think he had a light.

Yeah.

ATKINSON Light, light sort of a t-shirt like a Sloppy Joe type thing.

Right.

ATKINSON You know loose.

Light.

ATKINSON Loose fitting t-shirt.

OK.

ATKINSON I think I actually have it there in my statement.

We'll take a look just and confirm it now please.

ATKINSON He was short haired now, he had, I remember he had very short hair.

Can, can you recall what the boy was like that come to the landrover and grabbed Constable Neill.

ATKINSON He had a, like an aquamarine blue shirt on and he was stout.

Right.

ATKINSON And he would have been tall, like he'd have been far taller than me.

Aha. And had he and I know it sounds stupid, can you recall if he was wearing a tie or anything like that.

ATKINSON I don't sir, no. He looked he was respectively dressed like, you know what I mean.

Yeah.

ATKINSON He wasn't, I don't think he was wearing jeans or anything, I think it was shirt and, I couldn't say about the tie but I think it was a shirt and sports trousers or something like that you know.

Right OK.

ATKINSON Ahm right it's at the bottom of my statement there, I followed Constable Neill to Market Square, aye I think this person was dressed in a light coloured casual top.

Ehm.

ATKINSON Right.

OK so this person was run over to X.

ATKINSON He was run over to the corner of the street,

it probably would have been maybe about there
sir.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

The corner of the Woodhouse Street.

Yeah that's where the R is here at
(inaudible)

ATKINSON

Yes but.

OK.

ATKINSON

As soon as we let go of him he just run
straight back and got st, tore into these
boys again.

Yes.

ATKINSON

And at this stage.

Well was, did that mean that he, what side of
the fence did that mean he was then.

ATKINSON

Well I still assumed he was a Nationalist
because.

Why.

ATKINSON

Well he was kicking at these boys who were on
the Protestant side.

OK.

ATKINSON

Because I would recognise them you know.

No that's OK, yeah.

ATKINSON

So I at this stage I think P40 and Neill
and myself were together.

Ehm. Ah with this person.

ATKINSON

Ahm well I know myself and Alan Neill were
definitely together but I think P40
was close at hand and with the numbers that
there was on the street I, I think I said to
some of them, if you're going here you need
to stick together because them boys got one
and you're, one of you out on your own like
it's curtains you know.

Aha.

ATKINSON

So I think at that stage there was stones and
bottles was coming.

Ehm. Ahm now you say you think there was
stones or bottles.

ATKINSON Well there was, there was stones and bottles being thrown.

By whom.

ATKINSON Just immediately after we.

Brought this boy over.

ATKINSON Yes. From the upper end, if you could sort of put it this way, the Prods sort of held their ground here.

Aha.

ATKINSON You know where I've drawn the, drew the lines, they've sort of held their ground here and sort of claimed this as our territory and anything below it there we'll just stone and bottle it you know there was a few, well I, was a, I'd say, I'd say in total about ten Catholics I thought, there was a number of girls, there could have been two or three girls and the rest males.

Aha.

ATKINSON And they were sort of on our side of the line if you understand what I mean.

OK. Now you've brought this person here.

ATKINSON Yeah as soon as we let go, away he goes.

Away he went and what happened.

ATKINSON He went back.

Immediately after, that, what did you do immediately.

ATKINSON Stones and bottles was coming, we run again.

Yes.

ATKINSON To try and get them parted.

Ehm, that's when you say we run again.

ATKINSON But. The whole three of us.

Yeah.

ATKINSON Right and she was on the radio looking help as far as I'm aware, right when I run up the first time, this area here was clear.

Ehm.

ATKINSON As such, there was no, most of the, all the, all the confrontation.

And you say.

ATKINSON That was taking place was there sir.

Ah where you have marked.

ATKINSON Where I have marked yes.

So the second time then you ran up ah.

ATKINSON Right.

Show me, mark there again, where that, where there were, people were at then.

ATKINSON Right they had moved back a wee bit further, maybe five to ten yards back.

Yeah. And just mark that as, what is that. That's. X5. Yeah is that, is that, what's. That's X3. X3, OK five then.

ATKINSON Maybe five yards further back, they'd come back this way.

Yes and just mark that X5 as well.

ATKINSON Right.

So that it's, both are the same.

ATKINSON Right.

But then the next thing there must have been, you're saying there were people here as well.

ATKINSON Yes there was.

The second time you ran up there was people here.

ATKINSON Yes there was a boy lying on the ground outside here. I think that's where it was marked wasn't it.

You, you've two and I'll just for the purpose of tapes.

ATKINSON Yes.

I'll put two, you've, there's two indications marked, area indicated by police 10th of the 6th '97.

ATKINSON Right.

An area indicated by police 10th of the

6th '97.

ATKINSON

Right.

Can you, for the purpose of the tape, tell us exactly what those two points are because they were marked by yourself.

ATKINSON

Right, yes.

And Constable Neill on the night of.

ATKINSON

There was, there was, when I run back the second time after, after we had run up and run back with this guy.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

When I turned round to run up again there was a boy lying here.

You're indicating round number nine and.

ATKINSON

Yes, yes.

Area indicated by the police.

ATKINSON

And there was a guy lying here.

And that's the other point, arrow pointed, indicated.

ATKINSON

Yes.

And is closer up towards the church up ahm.

ATKINSON

Yeah.

Market Street.

ATKINSON

In front of Eastwoods Clothing.

Eastwoods.

ATKINSON

Now on the original swoire if you'd like to call it, up into this crowd those two guys definitely weren't lying there.

Aha.

ATKINSON

But if you can imagine when we run this boy back these clients are all still fighting amongst themselves and there's only three of us and I would have assumed if you're talking about thirty five Prods and ten Catholics with a couple of girls, you're talking about forty odd people fighting.

Aha.

ATKINSON

In, in wee groups among themselves, so these two guys are lying on the ground and we got to the upper side of them and tried to keep these other clients off but there was only three of us and I was at this side here and I think Alan was to my right and I think ah P40 was to his right but I couldn't say that, I know Alan was definitely to my right, so when I'm facing up the town towards the church, and they're in front of me and also some are over to my right here.

OK yeah, you could mark that as well, just to give us some indication, roughly where you think you were.

ATKINSON

Right.

Of yourself and Alan.

ATKINSON

Right, well if that's.

Yeah.

ATKINSON

If we say, if we say that's the guy's sort of torso lying there.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

Right. I'm a couple of yards in front of him standing here, which is X6, would that be right.

Yeah.

ATKINSON

Right I'm there and the torso is marked by a square box.

Square box.

ATKINSON

Or a rectangular box. Write body in it.

OK.

ATKINSON

Will that do.

Yeah and then where do you think that Neill was.

ATKINSON

I think he was, he was in line with me, but over to my right a wee bit.

Aha. He was in line with you but to the centre of the road or, or.

ATKINSON

Ahm just maybe short of the centre of the road.

So you were relatively close.

ATKINSON

Yes.

OK. Have you any idea then. You want to mark just where you think he might have been.

ATKINSON

That's X7.

Yeah. Now where, where do you think the other Constable was.

ATKINSON

I think he was over, further across but I'm not sure.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

I couldn't honestly say.

Right and you're indicating towards Insteps Sports, towards that side of the road.

ATKINSON

Aha, aha.

Across the central reservation.

ATKINSON

Yeah, this thing was, had spread from one side of the town to the other really and what happened was, you were getting one faction running at the other faction, sticking the boot in and running away again.

Now when you say one side of the town to the other, do you mean one side of the street.

ATKINSON

Yes one side of the street.

Do you mean one side of the street or one side of the town.

ATKINSON

One side of the street to the other side of the street sir.

Yeah.

ATKINSON

In, in various bits and pieces of groups.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

Not in a solid line but in various bits and pieces.

Yeah.

ATKINSON

And you'd have got guys breaking through, past us and kicking at maybe somebody behind you.

OK.

ATKINSON

And you'd have tried to push them back, at this stage we'd the batons out and we were

trying to keep these boys back.

OK, right now let's assume this, that's the case.

ATKINSON

Right.

Were there ladies about, were there any women about.

ATKINSON

Yes there was a couple of women, yes.

And what were they doing now.

ATKINSON

Right.

And was there anybody near this person.

ATKINSON

Now.

The one much lower down the road.

ATKINSON

I think, I think there was lady at the two of them, you know.

You mean.

ATKINSON

One woman at each.

One at each.

ATKINSON

Yes. But I remember a woman saying to me, would you get an ambulance.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

And I shouted to Denise, have you called an ambulance and she said she had.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

So during the fracas as this went on and got sort of more permanent the lines, the lines sort of got more permanent between the two and we were stuck in the middle then.

Ehm. Well then so, now where, where were the, let's say the Prods here in front of you.

ATKINSON

Yes.

The Nationalists are behind you, is that what you're saying.

ATKINSON

Yes. But then every now and again they sort of intermingled through each other and there wasn't enough of us to keep them apart, if you can imagine the.

So this.

ATKINSON There's only three of us and they're spread all over the street.

Yeah so.

ATKINSON We just.

It's a continuing fracas.

ATKINSON Sort of in and out of each other and we tried to break it up as best we could, every time one group run into another we got them sort of pulled apart.

Yeah.

ATKINSON We hadn't enough manpower to, to control the situation as such.

And then on top of that you're saying occasionally this crowd here would come down and kick this person here.

ATKINSON Not at this stage, attempted to, not at this stage.

Right.

ATKINSON Right.

So now, let's before you go, you mention the two ladies.

ATKINSON Yes.

What were the two ladies actually doing or one lady.

ATKINSON Right.

Or whatever.

ATKINSON Right at one, I think one was kneeling down with this boy.

And you're indicating now at number.

ATKINSON Aha the one in front of the home bakery.

The one closer to (inaudible).

ATKINSON Yes, aha. At some stage during the thing one of the ladies was sitting with a boy's head on her lap, I know that and she said to me, have you called an ambulance as I've said and I said to Denise, have you called an ambulance, she says, I have, so as the fracas continued then the woman kept saying to me,

is the ambulance coming and I tried to reassure her as best I could, I said, yes it's coming, it was called, it's called and I think the ambulance took about ten, I would guess at ten or twelve minutes.

Aha.

ATKINSON

Before the ambulance arrived.

But was she just standing talking or was she.

ATKINSON

Oh no she was down sort of trying to, but I think Alan now I didn't see him doing it but I think Alan put this person into the recovery position.

On their side.

ATKINSON

Yes. But then I turned round at one stage and she had his head on her lap, this was prior to the ambulance coming.

For you to say head in her lap, how do you mean, on her knee, sitting on her knee with the head.

ATKINSON

She was sitting on her honkers on her, well sitting probably on her knees with her head, his head resting on her lap.

Well Constable Neill says that he heard rasping very heavy rasping coming from the injured person, heavy breathing, call it what you like.

ATKINSON

Yes.

Ah but that was how he describes it.

ATKINSON

There was glass, right there was glass around him, there was glass around this person.

Aha.

ATKINSON

Right and I had saw Constable Neill with him and he was sort of lying stretched out and then I was still trying to beat these boys off.

Aha.

ATKINSON

And when I turned round then he was in the recovery position.

Aha.

ATKINSON

So I assumed that Constable Neill had put him in the recovery position. So I had said to, I had shouted, as you'll appreciate while

this was going on, we're sort of being manhandled and I'm trying to shout at Alan and trying to shout at these boys to keep off and I shouted to Alan, is he alright or something and he says, I don't know, I think so.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

Something like that.

Had other police arrived at that stage.

ATKINSON

Right the next thing was then I'm not sure it was the livery car arrived, there was a car arrived then and there was a lad, Silcock.

Aha.

ATKINSON

Was in one of the cars and still the ambulance hadn't come and Dean would be a bit of a first aider type lad you know and I says to Dean, could you see to that fella, see that he's alright and Dean he worked away at him, but the girl was still there but in or about it but Dean, he made sure that he was on his side like and all that.

And do you know which one we are referring to, which person that we are referring to.

ATKINSON

No I didn't know at the time who was who or what.

But could you describe that person that was, Dean, that Dean Silcock was attending to.

ATKINSON

I think he had a leather jacket on.

Right.

ATKINSON

Ahm I just can't honestly remember.

And in location wise would he have been the person.

ATKINSON

Oh yes the one in front of Eastwoods.

Yeah. And you're referring to the one in front of Eastwoods.

ATKINSON

Yeah aha. So then during this time I think, I think a car arrived and two in it which was the, the livery car.

Aha.

ATKINSON

There was two or three cars sort of arrive in quick success.

Yeah.

ATKINSON

Succession and I'm not just sure what, which one arrived first but I think the livery car arrived first. At this stage the ambulance still hadn't arrived.

OK were there any bottles or anything like this being thrown at this stage.

ATKINSON

Ahm well during the.

Or was there just the one spate of bottles being thrown and the stones being thrown.

ATKINSON

The heaviest.

As you said initially.

ATKINSON

Right the heaviest spate of bottles being thrown was at the start initially but then there would have been an odd one going here and there, sort of throughout the whole incident.

Yeah, as a matter of instance did that bottle throwing or anything like that, did that, how did that affect you in your capacity as a policeman doing your duty.

ATKINSON

Well we're well used to it sir you just duck and go on you and if you get hit.

So it didn't affect you or it didn't stop you or anything like that there you kept.

ATKINSON

No.

You kept doing your best to prevent fighting and.

ATKINSON

I'd been in the, a lot more horrendous situations than that one, bottles and stones and, and (inaudible) grenades and petrol bombs.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

So we just kept going on.

Yeah did you hear any of them, any talk from, from these ladies.

ATKINSON

Yes well when, when, as I say during the, the thing maybe a couple of minutes after it had all gone on, they were shouting, you sat there and watched that, that type of thing at us.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

Like.

And I think there was another man he said to one of the other Constables, what the fuck are you going to do about this.

ATKINSON

Right.

Did you hear that.

ATKINSON

When another car arrived there was a policewoman in it, A [redacted], right and there was a boy with a baseball hat and a red, white and blue scarf round his face and he got stuck into her, now he was on the other side of the street.

What, sorry, yeah.

ATKINSON

Now he was over, he was over towards Instep and he sort of got stuck into A [redacted] but A [redacted] is sort of fit to handle herself and she got a grip of the boy and got him, there was a whole scuffle and she got him arrested, or got a grip of him anyway but she was having trouble with him, at this stage where I was, in front of the body it was quite, they had sort of all moved into the middle of the road again and I run across, initially I thought she was in too much trouble to handle it on her own and I run across to try and get a grab of him as well, so she run him back to the landrover.

Ehm.

ATKINSON

So I'm sort of with her but not holding on to him or anything and this guy then he grabs me and has a bit of a hammer with me, one of the Nationalist boys, and I think it was the original boy that opened the door on Alan.

Aha.

ATKINSON

So he tried to get the baton off me and he hit me two or three digs and he broke the baton strap off my baton but I was able to hold on to it, so while this was, this was in this position here now back at.

X1, X1.

ATKINSON

Right, bear in mind.

Well how did you get back here.

ATKINSON

Right I run back with A [redacted] and this boy.

Do you know what your boy was called.

ATKINSON

He's called Lunt.

Lunt.

ATKINSON

Right. I run back with them, right, so I'm here and this boy is having a bit of a manhandle at me, it was more a bit of a wrestling come hammering match between us, so while I'm here, I'm sort of looking round to see if Alan or somebody is there to give me a bit of a hand and I could see up the street here a couple of boys running in and out at the body that was lying on the road.

Right we're going to change over the tape going to turn off the tape now and again taken from my wrist watch the time is 9.18 pm.