

This interview is being tape recorded. The interview is being conducted in an Interview Room at Armagh Police Office. I am Detective Constable [REDACTED] from CID, South Region. Other Officer present is Detective Sergeant Wenford McDowell, CID, South Region - and also present is

OMBUDSMAN [REDACTED] from the Police Ombudsman Office.

The date is the 10th of April 2001 and the time taken from my watch is eh 9 49 pm. Now also present is solicitor

SOLICITOR Sean Hagan, Portadown.

OK, just for the tape then, could you remind me of your name, please.

ATKINSON Robert Cecil Atkinson.

OK, Robert, at the end of or at the end of the previous interview, you have already been given the notice, explaining what will happen to the tapes. Now I want to again remind you that we were investigating the alleged Conspiracy to Pervert the Course of Justice on the 27th of the 4th 97 and the 25th of the 11th 97 eh inclusive, relating to the Murder of Robert Hamill. Now in relation to that I have to again remind you that you are under caution, under Article 3 of the Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 and that 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. You understand that.

ATKINSON I do.

And you understand the reason that you are here.

ATKINSON I do.

OK. For the formality, I suppose, at the end of the last interview I referred to one item in particular I suppose was really the taxi log

ATKINSON Yes.

Which referred to Rodney Smith, Joy Kitchen had stayed in Michael McKee's house on that night. Have you any more thoughts in relation to that issue as we say to you

ATKINSON No.

We believe that Michael and Andrea McKee were at home eh I showed you a copy of DL4 which is the taxi log; this is the original documentation here and eh that's the entry there. I'm referring there to the middle of this page, it's headed the top, Saturday the 26th of the 4th 97, 2 15, which is 2 15 am, [redacted] Smith, town, driver 9.

ATKINSON

That's right.

You understand that.

ATKINSON

Yes.

You see that exhibit. Also in relation to that, I want to show you the original, sorry, town

SOLICITOR

I think it says [redacted] isn't that right.

Pardon, [redacted], yes, [redacted].

SOLICITOR

Yes.

Which according to the girl in eh Irene, Irene

SOLICITOR

That's her, that's her abbreviation

Irene McKee would say that's [redacted]  
[redacted]

SOLICITOR

In the town.

SOLICITOR

Rather than [redacted]

The town would be Portadown town centre, she would normally write town

SOLICITOR

Right.

If it's outside there's, unless, I'm trying to find another town but I think they are all round Portadown, I suppose, Richhill

SOLICITOR

Yeah.

You know it's not Rich, if it's not Portadown town then she writes the town in eh

SOLICITOR

Uh huh.

The other one is the M14, it's basically eh is the telephone billing that you produced yourself to the interview and

ATKINSON

Yes, Mr Hagan produced it.

Mr Hagan but it's your telephone billing

ATKINSON

Yeah, that's correct.

ATKINSON

That you produced through Mr Hagan

Yeah.

I think it was marked up, if I recall collectively in the interview there was a couple of pencil lines under the relevant time so

SOLICITOR

That's right.

Right, so that's the original of that again, just to show you for

ATKINSON

OK.

For formality sake eh I am going to deal with maybe Andrea McKee has made a statement which is maybe the best thing we can, we can refer some of it at the start but we'll deal with some of the statement that Andrea McKee has made. Now as I said to you she has made a couple of statements on that, the 20th of June she made a statement which we have covered some of the things already eh the 20th of June of the year 2000. She has followed that up by another statement on the 25th of October 2000. The statement is in greater length and eh in that I don't intend to read it all because as I say there are thirteen typed pages here eh I intend to read out some of the highlighted parts

SOLICITOR

No problem.

And comment on those.

SOLICITOR

Uh huh.

If that's, happy enough with yourselves.

ATKINSON

Right, that's fine.

Eh it talks about her relationship with Michael McKee and you know how she met Michael and that, and she said she met, I first met, reading from Page 2 here, I first met Robert and Eleanor, Eleanor Atkinson quite a number of years ago when their daughter [REDACTED] attended classes run by Michael, the Killygomaine Centre in Portadown. She says then that

ATKINSON

Ehm that's not exactly right here

Right

ATKINSON

Ehm the class was at eh what do you call the premises, at the Classic Bar, you know where [REDACTED] old shop used to be.

SOLICITOR Is that in Edenderry.  
 ATKINSON Yes.  
 SOLICITOR Yeah.  
 ATKINSON Uh huh.  
 SOLICITOR Opposite (inaudible), opposite Weir's.  
 ATKINSON Where Somerville's factory was.  
 SOLICITOR Oh yes, that's right  
 ATKINSON In there.  
 SOLICITOR Uh huh, yeah.  
 ATKINSON There's a name for it, some Club.  
 SOLICITOR Yes, there's, I think it belonged  
 ATKINSON It belongs to some of the Churches  
 SOLICITOR That's right, I think that's right, it  
 belonged to (inaudible) Centre, yeah.  
 ATKINSON That's actually where I first met her.  
 SOLICITOR Yeah.  
 ATKINSON Right.  
 ATKINSON It wasn't, you know what I mean  
 She said that [redacted] was five year old at the  
 time, would that have been about right.  
 ATKINSON Eh could've been younger even.  
 ATKINSON Might've been younger.  
 ATKINSON Uh huh.  
 And she said she remembered Robert, once  
 asked Michael is the son of [redacted], who  
 Robert knew him at Military Camp so  
 Michael's father was a Captain in the UDR  
 many years before. She goes on then later on  
 to say, on occasions we would meet up,  
 social occasion we would have gone to their  
 house on the [redacted] [redacted] for drinks and  
 Michael went occasionally to football  
 matches with you.  
 ATKINSON She goes also.  
 She also eh yes she said she and, and  
 yourself and Eleanor went to a football  
 match in Scotland  
 ATKINSON Uh huh.

And you did a bit of plumbing at times round the Club premises.

ATKINSON

Yes.

Eh although you were friends but Michael and Robert were much closer. Robert only ever visited our house in [REDACTED] if they were collecting us to go out for the evening. They did not like staying in our house for very long because of where it was, [REDACTED] I suppose

ATKINSON

I was only in it a few times but

Yeah.

ATKINSON

I had no problems staying in the house.

Eh

ATKINSON

Eh and I mean staying for an hour or whatever

Yeah, but I mean wouldn't have stayed over in their house.

ATKINSON

No, I had no reason to stay over, no.

Alistair Hanvey started to train with Michael when he was about thirteen of age, years of age she would say

ATKINSON

I don't know.

We were friends with his parent Kenneth and Elizabeth but not on the same scale as our friendship with the Atkinsons. I remember many occasions when Robert Atkinson, Alistair Hanvey, Eleanor Atkinson, Michael and myself were together in the same company. This occurred at various tournaments and competitions when we went to. I remember us altogether at a barbecue at Robert Atkinson's house. I'll read that bit again to you, no.

ATKINSON

No, you are OK ehm well when she says they were altogether there was a lot more than them.

You had a big barbecue at one time, did you.

ATKINSON

I had a barbecue one night

Yes.

ATKINSON

And there was a whole lot at it, I couldn't tell you, there was a lot out of the Tai Kwando Club not just only the named persons.

Right but that was, aye, how many would have been there.

ATKINSON

Eh there could've been twelve or fourteen maybe.

Yeah, Alistair would've been there, would he.

ATKINSON

I don't honestly know eh

She refers to Alistair being there

ATKINSON

She refers to him but I just, I wouldn't be certain.

Alistair is getting older and his commitment to training and attending training was not consistent. He always remained friendly with Michael. Robert Atkinson knew Tracey Clarke through the Club and also because she was Michael's niece. She says whenever the Omagh bomb happened in 1998 we were all away at a Tai Kwando Training Camp in Lanzarote, Robert and Eleanor Atkinson were there.

ATKINSON

That's right, yeah.

You went with the Training Camp at that time.

ATKINSON

Yes, they were training for the World Championships.

Well was the Hanveys and the Atkinsons or the Hanveys and the McKees were all there.

ATKINSON

Hanvey wasn't there.

Parents even.

ATKINSON

No.

Alistair wasn't there at that time.

ATKINSON

No, no.

There was a number of occasions prior to 1997 when Robert Atkinson, Eleanor Atkinson, Alistair Hanvey, Tracey Clarke, Michael and myself were altogether socially but this was generally around club activities.

ATKINSON

Yes, all club activities, yeah.

But she is building up pictures that do quite show the relationship maybe

ATKINSON

No.

With all these folk and knew very well.

ATKINSON

Eh as you would expect when the club went away they went away as a club.

Yeah.

ATKINSON

Eh we talked earlier about me being the Secretary, I usually arranged the finances for the bus and the tickets and hotels and things.

Yes.

ATKINSON

So

That is fine

ATKINSON

If the club away they went away as a club as you do.

But she refers to some facts in her first statement here she says she was watching the Sky TV and watching a boxing match and we said the night of the 27th of, there was no Nassim boxing match on that night and she covered the fact that she is not sure; she thought she was watching boxing that night

ATKINSON

Well I wouldn't know, I wouldn't know about that anyway.

No, well I mean you would not remember

ATKINSON

No.

She, she at that time she said she thought that they actually come round to watch a boxing match at the house at [REDACTED]

ATKINSON

No.

And then whenever we checked up there was no boxing match on and she was just saying well it mightn't have been Nassim but I thought there was boxing on TV but that's just my recollection. It was put to me about a phone call that was made from my home to a taxi firm in Portadown at 1 30 am on Sunday the 27th of April 1997. I recognise the number [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] it was Call-a-Cab in West Street which Michael and myself would regularly use to go to the club and return home. We did have a car which both of us shared and actually I can't remember the registration. Thinking about the night in question I am certain that Michael and I were at home that night. Nobody was living with us and nobody else had our house keys. I can recall there were a couple of friends called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] come out to our house that time and we believe they visited our house. Then she goes on to talk about ringing Call-a-Cab for a girl called [REDACTED] but she can't remember who. We had no regular taxi driver eh she again says I remember some

sort of boxing on the television during the Saturday evening. The only persons in our house were either arranged either over the phone or at the club where [redacted] and [redacted] were members. I can recall exactly when it was arranged but it could have been either the Saturday morning or the previous day. When they left their house, she goes on to refer to ordering a taxi. Michael and I got up on the Sunday morning. I recall making the breakfast. [redacted] now she's referring to her house in [redacted]

ATKINSON

Yes, again I wouldn't know because I wasn't there.

Now it's [redacted] not in your house she's referring to here at the minute.

ATKINSON

Right, well yes I understand.

She eh got up on the Sunday morning, she made the breakfast and Michael went out for a short time to get the Sunday papers and then at some time between 11 and 12 Noon Michael and I were in our house when Tracey Clarke came into the house; she was on her own. Tracey told us there had fighting in the middle of the town, Portadown, during the night. She didn't mention anything else about it and she did not mention Alistair Hanvey at that time. Tracey regularly called in so this was not out of the ordinary. Tracey would've stayed, I think at their house that time.

ATKINSON

I don't know.

I can't recall what we did during the course of Sunday. I do not recall talking to Robert or Eleanor during the course of that Sunday. In the days that followed Tracey Clarke came and spoke to Michael and myself. On the first occasion she spoke to me, I can't be exactly sure of when and where the conversation occurred, Tracey told me that Alistair Hanvey had been involved in the fighting. She also mentioned a number of other names but I do not, I do recall her mentioning Stacey Bridgett. Tracey also told me she had seen Robert Atkinson because Robert told her to get home. We put that to you before and you said

ATKINSON

Well if I did I can't recall it, I may have eh shouted at the crowd go home or move home or something and she might've took it personally but I don't recall saying to her face to face

Or pointing directly at her.

ATKINSON

No.

She said that she had spoken to Robert Atkinson the time of the fighting. I remember talking to Robert Atkinson some point round that time and remember telling him that it was just his luck. I remember him telling me it was just his luck to be on when something like this happens. I did not discuss with Robert Atkinson when Tracey had said that Alistair Hanvey and the other person she named. I know that Michael was talking to Robert Atkinson occasionally, continually at that time but I do not know if he told him at the time that Tracey what witnessed. At some point, do you, do you remember did Michael ever say to you or Tracey said

ATKINSON

No.

That, that Tracey had witnessed Alistair involved in a fight.

ATKINSON

No.

At some point after that Tracey spoke to Michael and told him Alistair Hanvey had told her about Robert Atkinson ringing his house on the Sunday morning after he had got home from work, telling him to get rid of his clothes. I first heard about this from Michael and I recall after that Michael ringing Robert Atkinson from home and telling him what he had heard from Tracey. Do you remember Michael ringing you.

ATKINSON

No.

In relation to that

ATKINSON

Definitely not.

I remember Michael telling him that if he did do this then he was an idiot so what she's saying is that Michael gets to hear of the fact

ATKINSON

Uh huh.

Or the allegation that you had rang Alistair Hanvey's home and told him to destroy his clothes.

ATKINSON

I understand what you are saying but

And that Michael

ATKINSON

I definitely don't recall

Michael rang you

ATKINSON

No.

And told you that you were an idiot.

ATKINSON

No.

When Michael came off the phone, he just commented that if he did do it then he was an idiot and we didn't discuss it further at that time. Do you remember that conversation.

ATKINSON

No, not at all.

Can I refer now eh confuse things I suppose slightly, just a telephone billing, we have checked a lot of telephone billings in this, this account and we have raised one issue here.

ATKINSON

Well he rung our house pretty often

What's that.

ATKINSON

He did ring our house fairly often, you know what I mean.

Well the point I am going to make to you, I was trying to find out there in that interview, in that interview, in one of the interviews you were asked in relation to Michael McKee, did you have a contact number for him and you said you didn't and I have his phone number at the club.

ATKINSON

Yes, because eh I'm not sure what the position was with his phone at home and I think he used the mobile from home.

Now if you want I can try and hoak through, I have highlighted here in your interview

ATKINSON

Aye

If I can point the exact point out to you

ATKINSON

Oh I know, I know the point you are making but eh I normally, if I was ringing him I would have rang him at the club. Nine times out of time I would have rang him at the club, you know.

Maybe Paul you could look through that interview there and it's the point where he was asked, do you know Michael McKee - I know - he says uh huh - yeah - do you have a contact number for him eh no I have a, I know his number but I can't remember that.

ATKINSON

Uh huh.

Basically you don't say you know him well. How would you describe your relationship with Michael McKee at that time.

ATKINSON

Well he was [REDACTED] tutor as such at the Tai Kwando, you know what I mean.

Is he one of your best friends.

ATKINSON

Auck no, he wouldn't be one of my best friends now. We just met socially an odd time or when, when I had been socially together at some of the functions of Tai Kwando.

I mean I'm getting eh my eh be clear here, my attitude would be that I would be saying that I believe you were a very close friend of Michael McKee and that's why whenever this phone call was made and

ATKINSON

No.

In the morning time that you went to him and said

ATKINSON

No.

I have made a phone call here and I need this sorted out.

ATKINSON

No, he was my, he wasn't my best friend by far; he was

Do you understand

ATKINSON

Yes, I understand

Do you understand where I'm coming from.

ATKINSON

I understand where you are coming from, yeah, uh huh.

Would you, how would you describe him in relation to friendship.

ATKINSON

It's hard to quantify, do you want me to mark him out of ten or

If you want

ATKINSON

Do you know what I mean ehm he was just an acquaintance, he wouldn't have been the first guy I would have rung up and said, I'm going to a dance the night or he's sort of an erratic fella; if you, if you made arrangements to meet him tonight he wouldn't turn up.

Uh huh.

ATKINSON

Eh so it got to the stage where we just didn't bother at times, you know

Right, so the point I'm making, if I move from that

ATKINSON

Right.

To do with your phone billing, as I have said to your earlier we have checked phone billings for the likes of

ATKINSON

Right.

Michael McKee

ATKINSON

Right.

The Tai Kwando, your house

ATKINSON

Uh huh.

Eh to check just what calls were made to various people and eh to maybe explain some of the months, there is quite a number of calls between your house, Michael McKee's, your house, the Tai Kwando Club.

ATKINSON

Yes.

The Tai Kwando Club to your house.

ATKINSON

My Mrs would've rang eh Andrea McKee a lot; they would have talked a lot together or when I was working Andrea would've phoned or Michael would've, he had a habit of going missing and she would have phoned across to talk to Eleanor, you know.

For example, I refer to here as DL10A and that's the calls from Michael McKee's home to your house

ATKINSON

Right.

Now that's, these calls here, the 27th of April is the first one, I think that's, they didn't get the phone in to near that time anyway, Michael McKee at home and as you can see that's a sheet with a considerable number of calls.

ATKINSON

Well as I say she rang Eleanor a lot

The 25th of April 97 to the 25th of November 97

ATKINSON

Eh right

You know.

SOLICITOR

Those are all calls between what

Between Michael McKee's home and Mr Atkinson's home

SOLICITOR

Right, right.

Eh between that date the 25th of April 97

and could I refer to

ATKINSON

How many was there or what

Well I'll quickly count up here, one, two, three, four, five, six, I have counted up there forty-four and that's count up along there.

ATKINSON

In what sort of period, in a month, isn't it.

We're talking, no, no, we're talking between the 27th of April to the 25th of November on that sheet so that's a period of six months

SOLICITOR

Sorry.

Seven months.

SOLICITOR

Sorry.

Forty-four in seven months.

The 20th, the sheet on this here

SOLICITOR

When the 27th of April

On this sheet here it's the 27th of April

SOLICITOR

Which year now.

Ninety-seven, we are just dealing with the period of 97

SOLICITOR

Yeah and to when

Around this time, the 25th of November 97. We can go to another sheet here which maybe takes the phone calls from your house to, I'll refer to DL9A, is the phone call from your house to Michael McKee's home, the reverse really.

ATKINSON

Uh huh.

If that's the case we have seventeen calls in the period of the 31st of May to the 22nd of November 97.

SOLICITOR

The 31st of May

If I could find the bit about McKee being mentioned, it's not that the actual bit that (inaudible) - it may be in that earlier interview - I think it's the earlier on the 8th of September one - yeah

SOLICITOR

Seven calls.

Again that's a rough estimate, it wouldn't (inaudible)

ATKINSON Seventeen

No it wasn't seven, there was seventeen calls (inaudible)

ATKINSON Seventeen, Sean.

SOLICITOR Seventeen calls.

ATKINSON Yes, uh huh.

SOLICITOR Sixteen again when I count the second time.

SOLICITOR Sixteen calls.

I would like to reiterate that that's me roughly counting up that line, I don't think it's actually sixteen, fifteen. Here we are dealing with eh, eh item DL11A which is the eh calls from the Tai Kwando Club to your home, again I put that Michael McKee worked for the Tai Kwando Club so

ATKINSON Uh huh.

ATKINSON The Tai Kwando Club rings your home

Right.

The 14th of January 97 and there's two complete sheets and a part of a third one here in that envelope so, again the point I'm making there is a considerable number of calls

SOLICITOR Ehm between the period, Sergeant

ATKINSON Again, again I would point out that when he was taking classes at nights, she would've been sitting there on her own, she would have rang Eleanor just for a conversation.

And this is actually from, this is actually from the Club to your house

ATKINSON Yes, uh huh, well she would've been sitting in the Club.

Was at the Club, you mean.

ATKINSON Yes, uh huh.

ATKINSON That's through to the 28th of November 97

He would've been down at the gym taking classes and she would've been sitting up in the foyer on her own so she would've rang Eleanor and had a bit of a

SOLICITOR How many, roughly how many calls.

Two full sheets and about eh six extras so whatever that first sheet was

SOLICITOR

(inaudible)

You know it's not the exact number, it's the, it sort of gives the flavour of, this was not a case of very casually, sure we saw each other occasionally, I'm exploring the area of, I mean

ATKINSON

Well eh

There was a fairly regular contact between

ATKINSON

Well you are not aware who made the calls, that's the thing.

Yeah, yeah and I'm not trying to

ATKINSON

No.

To say that

ATKINSON

No, no.

I'm saying it's contact between your home and the Club and again

ATKINSON

Yes, that's right but you are not aware of who made the calls, again it could've been Andrea ringing Eleanor; Andrea rang eh [redacted] and big [redacted] used to ring [redacted] from the Club regular.

Right, fair enough as I say we can't

ATKINSON

You know.

Put whose there. DL9B which is telephone calls from your house to the TKD Club, the 15th of January right through to the 24th of November, again a similar sort of time period and again we have two complete sheets and there is six things that

ATKINSON

The same thing again eh [redacted] rung as we call big [redacted] (inaudible) and eh Eleanor would have rung Andrea as well.

SOLICITOR

Ehm.

ATKINSON

There is a whole mixture in that, you couldn't just say I rung Michael McKee everyday of the week.

Now I want to refer then to exhibit, back to exhibit DL10A. As I said to you earlier that, when we got to that part of eh Andrea McKee's interview where she says that Michael eh was on the phone to you and referring to the fact that he had heard you had rang Alistair Hanvey's home or whatever telling him to destroy his clothes, he told you you were an idiot.

ATKINSON

Yes.

Eh I note with interest here there is a call here on the 2nd of May now there are two calls which we have particular interest in from your home to Kenneth Hanvey's home eh the first was 8 37 am on the Sunday morning

ATKINSON

8 37 am

The second one was on the eh 1624 hours on the 2nd of May and again

ATKINSON

Uh huh.

I think in previous interviews your wife has said that she believed that she maybe made that call

ATKINSON

Right.

In relation to Tai Kwando boots and stuff. There is a phone call here from Michael McKee's home to your home on the 2nd of May at 1618 hours

ATKINSON

Right, uh huh.

Now the previous one before that was the 27th of April for twenty-seven minutes and that's at seven o'clock at night

ATKINSON

Right I don't

And again it's a call from Michael McKee's home to your home

ATKINSON

Yeah.

But it is of interest to me to note and you can put whatever idea you want on it yourself but at 1618 hours Michael McKee goes up to the phone to your home or a person from Michael McKee's house rings somebody in your house

ATKINSON

Right.

At 1618 hours and speaks for forty-one seconds. 1618 hours forty-one seconds and 1624 from your telephone analysis shows your house then ringing Kenneth Hanvey's house

ATKINSON

Uh huh, my wife suggested that she was looking boots and gear, he might've rang her and asked her had she got the boots and gear because she run after the kids a bit.

That's a possibility.

ATKINSON

Yeah.

And the possibility also is that when Michael McKee rings you to say if you did that you are stupid; your first reaction would possibly be how does he know that, the more, the less people know about this the better, I need to shut this down

ATKINSON

No.

And I get on to Kenneth Hanvey to say Kenneth

ATKINSON

I did not ring Kenneth Hanvey

Alistair

ATKINSON

That is absolute nonsense.

Alistair, what's going on.

ATKINSON

No, I did not ring Kenneth or Alistair on that date.

Thank you, Paul. I'm referring here, refer back to the fact of

ATKINSON

Yeah

The interview of the 9th - the interview on the 9th September, which is eh I think that was the first day of your interview but it's actually the second interview

ATKINSON

Yeah.

The first interview covered a lot to do with the Landrover, the second interview I refer to transcript page 58 and eh referring to, I think it was Alistair Hanvey and there was some chat about was he, once then he was put out of the club, well what's, not at that stage, he wouldn't have been there. No at that stage he might've been there. Who was the person that put him out of the club and you replied, Michael McKee and the question, do you know where he lives and you say, ehm and or do you have a contact number for him is the question that was put again and you replied, I don't, I know his number at the gym. At the gym, uh huh.

ATKINSON

Right, well

Do you have a contact number. I don't, I know his number at the gym.

ATKINSON

That was correct, I knew his number at the gym

But Robert

ATKINSON

Well I didn't ring him at home.

Somebody from your house rang his house on a very regular basis.

ATKINSON

Oh yes, the wife, the wife and, and [REDACTED] and them would've rang but I, I

So

ATKINSON

He was never at home, he was always at the gym. If I wanted Michael you, you phoned him, there was no good ringing home you would've got Andrea. I phoned at the gym if I was looking him.

The amount of calls from your house to that, I mean I take your point that the amount of calls from your house to Michael McKee's or even the gym was (inaudible)

ATKINSON

Michael was the sort of guy eh he changed his phone, he didn't have a phone for a while as you said.

Yes, he only got it in at that point.

ATKINSON

Yes and he didn't give his number out to everybody, I never asked him, can I have your home number; he gave it to Eleanor, he gave it to [REDACTED] some of them ones and they have it. If I wanted to get Michael at the house I would've said [REDACTED] ring Michael's number, I didn't even know it myself.

Right.

ATKINSON

It's not a question that I didn't want to ring him at home but it was a waste of time, during the week he was in, in the club ten in the morning till ten at night.

But he was there so much then why did [REDACTED] and your wife then not phone him at the club.

ATKINSON

But they were ringing Andrea

Uh huh.

ATKINSON

And Andrea was ringing them.

No, well that page there is obviously just your house ringing out

ATKINSON

Yeah, uh huh.

I know it's, we can never say who rang who from that

ATKINSON

Yes, I understand but I know where you are coming from

There was a house, house of people

ATKINSON

Yes.

But it seems to me, I can see the natural reaction

ATKINSON

I'm not, myself I'm not a phone orientated person anyway. My conversation on the phone would last a minute and a half or my wife and my daughter would be on the phone ten or twenty minutes any time, you know what I mean.

Yeah.

ATKINSON

Anything I ever had to say to Michael was short and sweet and

Yes.

ATKINSON

You know eh I always set out for next Sunday or is everything arranged for the trip to Cork or something like that there and he would've said no, we need to get so and so or bla, bla and that was that.

Right, eh we'll move on then to, I suppose a slightly, it takes a wee bit more time to get your head round in many ways, the time that Robert Hamill died, which was some days after the fight, I remember being in the gym one afternoon. It may have been a Thursday when Tracey was talking about the fight to me in the gym. I can't recall who was in the gym at the time but I remember a Policeman I know as Davey talk to me about it and asked me who Tracey was and did the Police know about what she was saying. We would say that is Davey McCaw. As far as I recall Tracey was talking about the fight and who was involved. I do not recall her talking about what Atkinson had done. Davey would attend our gym at different times to train and I remember talking to him again, which was, after which he then rang Portadown Police Station from our gym. As a result of that phone call, I then accompanied Davey to go and meet two Police Officers so Andrea goes, she's

ATKINSON

Well I'm not aware of that

You're not aware of this

ATKINSON

No, no.

Andrea goes and speaks to Police and recalls Tracey Clarke has been talking about the fight and Alistair Hanvey's involvement.

ATKINSON

Well I'm not aware of it.

She told them about Tracey Clarke, about the fight and what she had seen. I do not

remember mentioning to the Officers about what Tracey Clarke had said about Robert Atkinson. She says she doesn't recall at that time telling the Police about you ringing Alistair Hanvey telling him to get rid of his clothes.

ATKINSON

Well again I'm not aware of it, I don't know.

However, to make it simple if I can, Tracey Clarke eventually then does make that statement, which I read to you

ATKINSON

Yes.

After Andrea McKee brings her to the Station and she sits with Andrea McKee and makes a statement on the 9th night of the 10th morning. Andrea on the 8th of May was speaking to Police

ATKINSON

Yes, I understand that.

That night she brings Tracey and makes a statement; the 9th morning before Tracey has made her statement, before Tracey made her statement at nine o'clock or ten past nine in the morning, the Police in Portadown actually fax up to our Telecom Liaison Unit, a request to have your telephone bill checked and Kenneth Hanvey's telephone bill checked.

ATKINSON

Uh huh.

Now the point we make is that in order for them to be doing that they had to be told by somebody there is an allegation that Robert Atkinson had rang Alistair Hanvey's home or Kenneth Hanvey's house.

ATKINSON

Right.

That was nine in the morning and Tracey Clarke did not make her statement until that night.

ATKINSON

Right.

So Andrea McKee, although she says in her statement, I don't recall telling them about Alistair or Robbie Atkinson at that time. The only person that could've told the Police that Robbie Atkinson had rung Alistair Hanvey or Alistair Hanvey's home to tell him to destroy his clothes must have been Andrea.

ATKINSON

I don't

Do you understand the point I'm making

ATKINSON

I'm not with you, no.

But what I'm saying is Andrea

ATKINSON

(inaudible)

Andrea must have told the Police on the 8th night when she was speaking to them about the allegation about you ringing. Tracey Clarke makes a statement on the 9th night of the 10th day stating the same allegation that you had rang Alistair or Alistair Hanvey's home and tell him to burn his clothes.

ATKINSON

Uh huh.

Do you understand those two points. Andrea has repeated this to Police and told Police this account, Andrea comes in with Tracey and Tracey makes a statement.

ATKINSON

I'm sort of lost, still lost.

SOLICITOR

Yeah.

What, what I'll do, I'll tell you, I'll lead on to what I'm trying to say

SOLICITOR

What day are you talking about.

What I'm trying to say is Andrea McKee eh later on makes an alibi statement saying that I was present in Robbie Atkinson's house whenever that phone call was made and it was Michael McKee made that phone call; that was in October she makes that statement in your office to Mr Michael Irwin.

SOLICITOR

Uh huh.

What we're saying and the, the eh the thing I'm trying to get through to you here is, at that time if she had been in your house that morning when that phone call was made by Michael, Michael she said, I was present when Michael rang through to Kenneth Hanvey's house asking for Tracey.

ATKINSON

Right.

If she's sitting in that house in your morning, in your Sunday morning at 8 37 am and sits and listens to Michael ringing Kenneth when someone says to her, be it Tracey or she is repeating it to Police but Robert Atkinson rang Kenneth Hanvey's house on the Sunday morning to tell him to burn his clothes, Andrea would've said hold on a second, I was there; Michael and I stayed over that night

ATKINSON

No, no, that's

And we were sitting at the breakfast table and Michael made that phone call; Tracey's got it all wrong, Robbie didn't make that call sure that was Michael made that call.

ATKINSON

Well I don't know

Do you understand, do you want me to say that again.

SOLICITOR

Well what date are you talking about here, now.

SOLICITOR

Andrea made the statement, Andrea was, saw the Police on the 8th of, of May

The 8th of May, which year.

She actually met the Police, she met Michael Irwin and I think it was Johnny McAteer on the 8th of May and verbally told them about what Tracey

SOLICITOR

What year.

Oh 97, this is all 97.

SOLICITOR

Right.

And she saw the Police there; the Police go and do eh fax a phone check to check your phone and Kenneth Hanvey's phone for that date, the only reason being obviously to check to see if there any contact between you and Kenneth Hanvey

ATKINSON

On the 8th of May.

No, on the 27th, they're checking that area of time to see if there is any contact between you and Kenneth Hanvey

ATKINSON

Yes.

So Andrea McKee must be aware at that time or she was telling people at that time that you had made a call to Kenneth Hanvey's home. She sat in with the interview of Tracey Clarke, who was quite a considerable length in interview from sort of ten, eleven o'clock at night right through to sort of one or so the next morning. I can't remember the exact times but it is a considerable length of time when Tracey Clarke was being interviewed and making a statement, recounting the stuff I read to you earlier about Alistair Hanvey being involved in the fight and that Alistair had told her that you had rang him on the Sunday morning. Andrea McKee throughout that time on the 8th of May and on the 9th/10th of May when Tracey Clarke is

making her statement stayed silent about Michael McKee making the call but low and behold come October she turns up and says I was there when Michael McKee made that phone call.

ATKINSON

Well I can't, I have no comment on that like, I

Do you understand what I'm trying to explain.

ATKINSON

I see what you are trying to say, yes.

She's sitting there in your room and she knows that you did not make that call, you were up in bed sleeping, Michael rang to Kenneth Hanvey to look about Tracey.

ATKINSON

I see the point you are trying to make but I still, I, it's got nothing to do with me, I, I don't know anything about that, I was in bed.

But the reason, you understand the reason

ATKINSON

I understand the reason

She didn't make the comment was because at that time no conspiracy had been hatched.

ATKINSON

Well I don't know.

She wasn't

SOLICITOR

Well you have to make it clear in my own mind, I'm sorry for being evasive on that, ehm on the 9th and 10th of May of 97, Tracey Clarke's make, makes a very long statement in the interview to the Police.

It starts off on the 9th, evening of the 9th but it actually runs all night

SOLICITOR

Stretches into the 10th

I mean hopefully not us if we were sitting here at ten o'clock at night

SOLICITOR

Almost (inaudible)

If we were to carry on through to one in the morning

SOLICITOR

Yes.

We would be talking about over that.

SOLICITOR

Yeah so Tracey Clarke makes this lengthy statement beginning of the 9th of May 97 to the Police at which, which was present Andrea McKee

Yes, sitting with her

SOLICITOR

And, and Andrea McKee hears what is being said.

Yes.

SOLICITOR

And what is being said eh is inconsistent with what Andrea McKee herself later said in the statement to Detective Sergeant Irwin

Yes, it's inconsistent in that when she's saying, at the time she is sitting at the Police Station hearing the allegation that Robert rang the Hanveys, she should then immediately, because it's fresh in her mind, she should be saying but that Sunday morning we stayed over there and Michael phoned that phone call not Robert. We're talking a matter of days later when she is sitting with Tracey Clarke

SOLICITOR

But it wasn't when Andrea McKee who was being interviewed.

It was Tracey Clarke was being interviewed.

ATKINSON

That's right, uh huh.

But as well as that Andrea McKee had also imparted that information to the Police verbally on the 8th because otherwise on the 9th morning before Tracey even comes into the Station Police would not have been checking Robert's telephone bill against Kenneth Hanvey's telephone bill.

ATKINSON

Well that's

Nor, nor was

ATKINSON

And why, why was a statement not taken off her at the time.

She, there was no statement taken, she came along to the Police, she told them what she had heard but then it was taken

ATKINSON

Do you not think it would be a more wise thing to take a statement off her saying that.

SOLICITOR

Exactly, exactly.

But you see what she was saying at that time in time was effectively hearsay

ATKINSON

Yes.

Something that she had heard from another - Tracey Clarke had been told of this.

ATKINSON

Well I

That's what I'm saying to you there was no conspiracy or anything had been discussed or asked at that stage.

SOLICITOR

Well she does, she does make a statement to the Police then in October.

Yes - yes - and she

SOLICITOR

And Robert is saying if the Police were aware of some difficulty or inconsistency why did they not take a statement of Andrea McKee at the same time or at

ATKINSON

Or, or afterwards, would they

Yeah, because they would, they wouldn't have been aware of any at that time - I mean we were not involved and I can't answer the questions in relation to that aspect of why they hadn't statements and why they haven't this, that and the other but you understand, I mean it's not an easy point to get through your head; what we're saying is

ATKINSON

I understand, I know, I know what you are saying, yeah.

If Andrea was there when that phone call was made, you made it or that Michael McKee made

ATKINSON

I didn't make it.

She should have been piping up and saying stop, Tracey don't talk rubbish. I was there, Michael made that call but she didn't, she stayed silent.

ATKINSON

Well I have no comment on that like.

She goes on then, I'll read through that, she remained with Tracey where she was being interviewed

ATKINSON

Right.

And a Policewoman called [REDACTED], she goes through that eh Michael dropped us off and went home and sat with [REDACTED] and waited for us coming home. Ehm I can go through telephone analysis and show that we can show that Michael was, what Andrea says here does fit in with the telephone analysis of Michael ringing through to Irene Clarke and

ATKINSON

That's eh right, that's if it was Michael made the call, the phone call.

The phone calls from houses to houses.

ATKINSON

Yeah, they are houses to houses, they're not, you can't turn round and say

Michael McKee rang Robbie Atkinson or  
Michael McKee rang Eleanor Atkinson

No, we can put house to house

ATKINSON

They are just house to house.

Uh huh - the other thing that we could add  
and I suppose in relation to your telephone  
bill, is that eh Michael McKee, according to  
your allegation rings to speak to find out  
if Tracey Clarke is all right after the  
fight.

ATKINSON

Well I

And he rings Kenneth Hanvey's house at  
8 37 am

ATKINSON

I'm in bed.

And you're in bed.

ATKINSON

Yeah.

However, he makes no further call, he is  
told by Kenneth Hanvey, according to his  
account which we don't believe that Tracey  
is not here, Alistair is not here and  
Michael does not make another call, he  
doesn't ring

ATKINSON

Again that's got nothing to do with me.

Yeah, I know it's not but we can sort of  
say, well hold on a second Michael, you know  
if you make a phone call at least to find  
out if she is all right, you just don't stop  
with one call to her boyfriend's father  
there is plenty of other places; if you are  
really worried about Tracey the first place  
to start is her mother

ATKINSON

Right, well her mother

You see this

SOLICITOR

Well do you understand there is a difficult  
relationship

ATKINSON

As far as I know, yeah, as far as I am aware  
I don't, I don't know if you are aware or  
not the mother and him don't see eye to eye

I appreciate that and I mean to do with that  
we actually have a telephone billing which  
shows a lot of contact between Michael McKee  
and Irene

ATKINSON

Well it's probably again Andrea and [REDACTED]

Yeah, because I think at that stage their  
mother was dying

ATKINSON Eh

The father was dying at that stage

ATKINSON Yeah and

He died in July.

ATKINSON There has been a lot of animosity in the family over, I think his mother

Yeah.

ATKINSON And as far as I'm aware, I'm not

Well I know they said there was animosity

ATKINSON (inaudible)

And I am aware that the father died in July and they were aware he was quite seriously ill

ATKINSON That's right.

And there seems to be a lot of phone contact between the two families

ATKINSON Yes

So

ATKINSON I think it was really eh a must do job really

Yeah.

ATKINSON You know eh they talked to each other when they had to and that was it.

I recall Robert Atkinson telling me that Tracey Clarke had been to the Police Station and made a statement. This occurred not long after this but I do not know when Tracey Clarke was very worried about making a statement.

ATKINSON I did not tell her that Tracey Clarke had been to the Police Station; I wasn't even aware of it.

Michael and his father Jim did talk to her, advising her to tell the Police about what she knew. I have not personally I'll miss a bit out here, I'm not personally aware of any direct conversation between Robert Atkinson and the Hanveys over this period. The only contact I was aware of was when Tracey told me that Alistair Hanvey had told her that Robert Atkinson had rang his dad. I do know that Robert Atkinson and Kenneth Hanvey have been friends for a long time and

that Kenneth Hanvey works with the Northern Ireland Electricity Service which is where Eleanor Atkinson also works and that they would be friend

ATKINSON

That's correct, that's correct.

Would you be friends with Kenneth Hanvey.

ATKINSON

I would've been years ago but I wouldn't

Later in the year Michael told me that Robert Atkinson had spoken to him about the incident. This happened one night when we were both out together. On his return home, Michael told me that Robert had asked him to cover the phone call to the Hanveys. Michael told me that Robert had made another phone call, that he could cover that phone call himself, that referred to 1624, it was a phone call on the 2nd of May.

ATKINSON

Definitely not.

Michael told me that he had asked Atkinson why he had made the phone call. He said that Atkinson had told him that he had rang to try and help him and that he realised now that he should never have done it.

ATKINSON

That's nonsense.

Michael told me that Atkinson had told him that the made the phone call to get, to tell him to get rid of his clothes. This is the first time I knew that Atkinson had admitted making the call to Hanvey on the night that this happened. Robert and Michael had been out for, a Pub but I can't recall the night in question. It was, however, after he had been interviewed about it, that would be the 9th of September, sometime after the 9th of September you had been interviewed, she's saying that you discussed this night. I have been made aware that he had been interviewed about it. Michael said to me that he had agreed to do it for him although he didn't want to; there is the alibi

ATKINSON

It's nonsense.

He felt obliged as a close friend to do it and the family relationship with Tracey Clarke was perfect to cover the story. On one occasion after that and before Michael and myself made statements, Michael and myself were over at Robert Atkinson's house. We went there to sort the cover story out and Robert and Eleanor Atkinson were also present. Robert Atkinson led the discussion and he said the story would be that Michael and I had been staying at their house overnight

and he suggested that the call could be covered by Michael saying that he was ringing because of his concern for Tracey Clarke.

ATKINSON

No.

ATKINSON

It was Robert

Definitely not.

ATKINSON

What was that

Definitely not.

Right, it was Robert who thought out this story about Tracey Clarke. Robert Atkinson said to me that I would have to confirm that I had heard Michael on the telephone. Robert Atkinson mentioned about a second phone call that he had made but that he had that covered, any comment.

ATKINSON

Definitely not.

I do not know anything about the second phone call about his reason for making or his story to cover it. We were only there that evening to get the story right and we went home again after that. At some point after that I was aware that Michael and Eleanor went to Portadown Police Station to make statements. I was aware that Robert Atkinson was being interviewed again and I have, I was not asked by Robert to go to the Police Station. Whenever they went to the Police Station I stayed with [redacted] in Robert's house. When Robert, Eleanor and Michael returned Robert told me that I would have to make a statement. I knew what Michael had said because it had all been arranged to do what we would say before it. After that I can't recall when but it was some time later I was contacted by Robert Atkinson and told to go to Sean Hagan's office for 11 am one morning to provide a statement as we had originally discussed. I went alone to Mr Hagan's office and I was interviewed by a Police Officer, DI Irwin and made a statement.

ATKINSON

No, I arranged no interview or, Mr Hagan is aware of who arranged the interview.

The statement I did give was false. I do not remember whether I spoke to Robert Atkinson after that and he asked me did everything go OK. I said it did. I was present during a conversation after that when Michael spoke to Robert Atkinson about the solicitor's bill and telling him that he hoped that he would not have to pay for it. Robert Atkinson said that he would settle it

with the solicitor and pay the bill himself. I heard nothing else about this again and we never did get a bill from the solicitor.

ATKINSON

I have paid no bill or have I any intention to pay the bill.

And finally going through, I have never discussed this with the Hanveys but Robert told me that he had spoken to the Hanveys about it when the story, the cover story was being planned. Tracey

ATKINSON

I never see the Hanveys at all.

Tracey has never told me that any part of her statement is not true. As far as I know Robert Atkinson or Michael did not approach Tracey Clarke in an effort to stop her from giving evidence. I have been thinking about it, who was in my house the night of Saturday the 26th of April 97, we did have another couple who sometimes came to our house and these people were Rodney Smith and Joy Kitchen. Rodney lived in a flat in [REDACTED] I think it's [REDACTED]. Joy lived at [REDACTED]. When I think about it this couple may have visited the house on the Saturday night and when they came to our house they did use taxis.

ATKINSON

She said earlier on in her statement it was [REDACTED]

She talked about the [REDACTED] would have visited, [REDACTED] and that visited [REDACTED]

SOLICITOR

Uh huh.

And then said that when she thinks about it the Smiths visited as well. The issue of where Alistair Hanvey was and I'll just mention it to you in passing because I mean

ATKINSON

Yes.

It's of little interest to you but I mean eh

ATKINSON

Right.

To explain to you we believe Alistair Hanvey was not at home.

ATKINSON

Well I wouldn't have a clue, I don't know.

Alistair Hanvey, during his interview, stated that he went and stayed at his uncle Tommy's house that night

ATKINSON

Well

After the town centre, he went off and he

got to his uncle Tommy's sometime in the early hours of the morning, three o'clock or so and stayed there that night

ATKINSON

Yeah, yes.

With his uncle and his father then came to his uncle Tommy's and collected him.

ATKINSON

I haven't a notion.

Eh

ATKINSON

I know I know his uncle lives somewhere in [REDACTED] and that's all I know because I saw him walk

We have statements

ATKINSON

I saw him walking up the [REDACTED] you know.

Yeah, we have statement, I understand that's [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] that's where the uncle Tommy's lived.

ATKINSON

And I saw him going up

Yes.

ATKINSON

The [REDACTED] walking that road.

Yes.

ATKINSON

So I assumed he lived up there.

On the night in question eh after the assault in the town centre he turns up at a party at Tracey McAlpine's and there is a number of witness statements which I don't really believe we should go into now, we can go through them if you wish but there is a number of people who put him at a party, a party at Tracey McAlpine's house right up until the early hours of the morning.

ATKINSON

Right.

About half five or six o'clock while a lot of them were taking a drink and they say that Alistair was still there at half five or six o'clock in the morning

ATKINSON

Right.

Knocking about the party. Four or five various folk at the party all have made witness statements to that effect.

SOLICITOR

Which McAlpine's house

Tracey McAlpine.

SOLICITOR

And what date was that party.

That was that night of the incident, it went on through to the early hours of the 27th; it was the following

SOLICITOR

(inaudible)

Now I'm trying to find JDMc, JD23, maybe it's, it's maybe in the box or maybe it's in this pile here - it could well be - however, on checking of, here we have it here, number of friends with Alistair say that actually after the party they wandered up the town and they go to a taxi rank and Alistair, they believed, some of them got a taxi

ATKINSON

Right.

They think that possibly Alistair got a taxi in the town at that time and that they refer to the fact of wandering up the town and seeing tape at the scene, the incident scene

ATKINSON

Right.

A tape was put up at the incident scene at 727 hours so that would still put Alistair coming from the party, walking through the town and the Police start; we'll just interrupt the interview at what time - 22, 2232 - to change the tapes.

CHECKED & CERTIFIED AN ACCURATE TRANSCRIPT OF PACE  
TAPE NO T25557A INTERVIEW OF ROBERT CECIL ATKINSON  
ON 10 APRIL 2001 BETWEEN 2144 HOURS AND 2232 HOURS.

*Shawell* *HSF*