

MASTER TAPE NUMBER: T146503A

BRIDGETT - TAPE NO.1

This interview is being tape recorded. The interview is being conducted in an interview room at Lurgan Police Station. I am Detective Constable Keys from Portadown CID. Other police officers present are Detective Constable Lilly. The date is the 6th of May 1997 and the time is 1028am.

What is your full name.

BRIDGETT Stacey Bridgett.

Also present is.

SOLICITOR [REDACTED], Solicitor, Portadown.

At the conclusion of this interview Stacey I will give you a notice explaining what will happen to the tapes. You have been arrested under Article 26 of the Police and Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1989 on suspicion of

grievous bodily harm and assault occasioning actual bodily harm at the junction of Thomas Street/Market Street, Portadown in the early hours of the 27th of April of this year. Before I ask you any questions in relation to that I want to caution you and the caution says 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. I will explain that to you in layman's terms Stacey. We will ask you a number of questions and you don't, you are not obliged to answer those right. But having said that if you don't answer them, if you, if there is something that you might maybe at a later date maybe in a Court or any other legal tribunal or hearing, rely on or which might form part of your defence, right. If you don't mention that basically now when you are being questioned by the police, it may harm your defence alright. A court may draw an inference from that, do you understand that.

BRIDGETT

Yes.

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Right. Just bear with me a wee second here please.

Now I think the most appropriate place to start with would be, could you give me an account of your movements for the evening of the 26th of April and the early hours of the 27th of April.

BRIDGETT. Is this the night that that happened isn't it.

Yes.

BRIDGETT I just went to the Coach, came home from the Coach. Do you want the whole details.

Well if you can give me as much as you can.

BRIDGETT Just to the Coach and then town and then up home.

Right. Primarily we are concerned with the events obviously after you come from the Coach. Where did you get dropped off.

BRIDGETT It was Z-Cabs, there you know Country Fried
Chicken, around that area.

Right what time would that have been at.

BRIDGETT The bus leaves at quarter past one from the
Coach. About a quarter to two maybe.

Right. Can you tell me who you were with.

BRIDGETT Dean Forbes.

Right were you with anybody else.

BRIDGETT No.

After you got off the bus.

BRIDGETT Not that I remember.

Can you tell me what you were wearing that
night.

BRIDGETT Em.

That's after you got off the Coach bus.

BRIDGETT Shirt, jeans and shoes.

Jean, what type of jeans.

BRIDGETT Sonetti cords and a Ralph Lauren shirt.

What colour was that Ralph Lauren shirt.

BRIDGETT It was checked. Like red and yellow and stuff
on it. It is no particular colour like.

Is there blue in it.

BRIDGETT No I don't so. If there is it's very very
little, but I don't think so.

What did you do once you got off the bus then.

BRIDGETT Went up to the town and was talking to [REDACTED]
P40 [REDACTED] the policeman.

Where was that at.

BRIDGETT At the High Street there.

High Street right so could you put that just to a building or some place that we all know just where.

BRIDGETT What's at the corner, the Alliance and Leicester is on the corner, is it, aye.

Yes. That's the top of Woodhouse Street.

BRIDGETT Yeah facing onto High Street.

Were you, Were you on that side of the junction or were you on the lower side of the junction Stacey.

BRIDGETT What do you mean.

In other words were you on the Alliance and Leicester side of the junction of Woodhouse Street/Main Street or Market Street or were you on the Northern Bank side of it.

BRIDGETT I can't remember. I was just sort of in the road because we were crossing the road and the landrover pulled up and we started talking to P40 . You know just looking into the

passenger seat and P40 was in the back, a policewoman was in the front.

Whenever you saw the police landrover was the door of the landrover open.

BRIDGETT No they just pulled up beside me and opened.

Did you see anybody approach the landrover apart from yourselves.

BRIDGETT No not, well later on we did.

Did you see anybody speaking to the police just at the same time as you would have basically met them.

BRIDGETT Aye.

Could you describe that person.

BRIDGETT He was wearing a, he was a man like, about thirty, forty, wearing a blue suit, shirt and tie.

Right. Could you give me any of his physical

features, a description of him.

BRIDGETT Short hair.

What colour.

Dirty Fair maybe, I am not good with hair colours like.

Right.

BRIDGETT A big fellow like about thirty or forty. Well old compared to me.

Okay. What door of the landrover was that man at.

BRIDGETT The driver's side.

Right and he was there just as you're approaching the landrover.

BRIDGETT No we were there first.

You were there first.

BRIDGETT We were having a friendly conversation with

the police.

And you are saying that this man then came over to the door of the landrover.

BRIDGETT Aye I was at the passenger side and he came to the driver's side and complained.

What was, what did he say.

BRIDGETT Something like, 'Are you going to let them ones do this or do that'. He was just slabbering on.

What I am talking about now, prior to you actually coming up and having your conversation with the police in the landrover, did you see anybody near the landrover that might have been having a conversation with the police.

BRIDGETT No.

Did you approach anybody prior to going up to the landrover to speak to them.

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BRIDGETT No. I don't think so.

Or to have words with them.

BRIDGETT No.

So tell me what happens then, this man comes over, opens the door of the landrover.

BRIDGETT He starts complaining.

Now what happened then.

BRIDGETT I turned round and then the next minute there was like a sort of like a scuffle in the middle of the street and a couple of boys came down from Woodhouse Street and I went round to the back of the landrover to get away and I believed him to be a Catholic because I didn't recognise him.

You what, what sorry.

BRIDGETT I said who I believed. There was a fellow who I believed to be a Catholic, but I didn't recognise him, he could have been a Protestant

and maybe thought he was Catholic or something and he went round and punched me on the nose and busted my nose.

Where did this happen at.

BRIDGETT I went round the back of the landrover you know to go up the town to get out of the road because I seen the scuffle breaking out and he punched me on the nose.

How many people would have been on the street at the time you seen that scuffle breaking out.

BRIDGETT About, I don't know it's hard to know, there was just a few at the start but after it there was a brave few people.

Did you hear anything being said before it started.

BRIDGETT No just what your man said, 'Are you going to let them ones do this and do that'. There must have been a fight or something but I didn't see it, because I was at the passenger

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side of the landrover you know talking in
because P40 was in the back.

What was Dean Forbes wearing.

BRIDGETT I don't remember.

You were wearing a pair of Sonetti cords, what
colour.

BRIDGETT Like a navy something, I think it was, it was
either my Sonetti cords or my white jeans, I
can't remember but I was wearing a Ralph
Lauren shirt and my shoes, I know that there.
I can't remember what jeans I was wearing like
because I wear different ones every week.

Whenever, or could you describe to me exactly
where this scuffle was taking place.

BRIDGETT Right in the middle of the street between
Thomas Street and Woodhouse Street.

Right there is a central reservation there
that runs down the main street.

BRIDGETT

Em.

Was it taking place on the Woodhouse Street side of that or on the Thomas Street side.

BRIDGETT

I can't remember.

How far back were you whenever you seen it taking place.

BRIDGETT

Well the landrover was just you know at Woodhouse Street, you know where High Street is, just right on High Street and I just walked, we just sort of walked round the back of the landrover. I was just at the back of the landrover and looked and seen it, but I walked up to Woodhouse Street to try and get out of the road and then I was assaulted. I got my nose busted.

Now what exactly did you see in relation to the.

BRIDGETT

Just seen a few punches being threw like, kicks and what have you.

Did you see anybody going down.

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BRIDGETT Going down where.

Falling. Anybody getting hit, being put down.

BRIDGETT No just seen boys were standing, they were digging, that was it. I went to get out of the road.

And at that stage where was your friend.

BRIDGETT I didn't see Dean after that there.

Was he with you at the landrover at that stage.

BRIDGETT Aye he was talking into the thing with me so he was. You know whenever we were talking he was with me but then I went you know to get off side you know. away. I don't know Dean must have went up to, I don't know, see Dean after it. He must have blew the town or something. I don't know.

Was he there when you got hit on the nose.

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BRIDGETT Don't know, as I say I didn't see Dean after that.

What direction did you say you went at that stage after you got hit on the nose.

BRIDGETT I went, I went to go up towards the Church but I stood because like any digging would bleed my nose, would make my nose bleed. I just let the nose or the blood drip out of my nose. Then I tried to say to a policeman, you know it was all confusing, so I went up towards up the town and stood at St Marks Church and then the police came and they moved everybody on. A young girl wiped my nose and I went home.

Do you know who it was that wiped your nose.

BRIDGETT No I don't, a wee small girl you see knocking about the town. I don't know her name like.

A civilian or a.

BRIDGETT Yes a civilian.

A civilian. Were you carrying anything that

night.

BRIDGETT No not that I remember, I can't remember.
Well no offensive weapons or nothing if that's
what you mean.

Well would you have been carrying anything
outside an offensive weapon.

BRIDGETT No.

You didn't have any drink in your hand or a
bottle or anything like that.

BRIDGETT Don't remember. I can't remember like I might
have had but I don't remember.

Well what do you normally drink.

BRIDGETT Anything. I wouldn't drink spirits but I
would drink anything else.

Well if you did have a drink in your hand what
would it be normally, outside a pub.

BRIDGETT It could be bottles of beer, it could be

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cider, it could be Buckfast, it could be anything.

Had you much to drink that night.

BRIDGETT I wasn't bloustered, I wasn't drunk you know I was just happy drinking you know, I knew what I was doing like.

You were what could be described as rightly, would that be right.

BRIDGETT I wouldn't say that.

But you have a clear enough recollection even with whatever drink you had, of what took place.

BRIDGETT Hmm, hmm

So then you say at that stage, your story really is at the moment is that you came back from the Coach, you dandered up the town, you were talking to police at the landrover.

BRIDGETT Yes.

And you went round, you seen the scuffle starting, you went round the back of the landrover and you got a dig in the nose. At that stage you were trying to get off side and after momentarily pausing and getting your nose sorted out, you headed on up towards the Church direction.

BRIDGETT

Aye well I stood there for a while to just let the nose bleed. It was sore just right on the bridge of the nose and then the scuffle went on and I stood out of the road and the police came and moved everybody on and I walked on up the town and got my nose wiped for me and that was it.

Did you not try to do something about getting the dig in the nose.

BRIDGETT

Well I went to sort of say to the policeman that I got dug but there was a whole lot of confusion and the police hadn't really time to look after me like.

Did you not try to do something with the boy

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who give you the dig in the nose.

BRIDGETT No. He was too big for me to dig.

What did he look like.

BRIDGETT Small and stocky that's all I remember.

Do you remember anything about his clothing.

BRIDGETT No. I don't really look at people's clothing,
what he was wearing.

Do you know what started this fight do you.

BRIDGETT No because I was talking to police and then
the next minute your man came down and started
gaunching it to the police.

Did you hear any verbal exchanges.

BRIDGETT Hmm.

What sort of things were being said.

BRIDGETT Orange bastards, that sort of thing.

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Sectarian abuse between people you know.

And what else was being said.

BRIDGETT Nothing like, that's all I really heard you know shouting.

Were the Prods shouting as well.

BRIDGETT Hmm.

What were they shouting.

BRIDGETT. Fenian bastards.

Did you shout anything.

BRIDGETT No.

You never said a word.

BRIDGETT No I stood talking to the police at the time and then I went round and I heard them shouting and abusing and I looked over and the next minute a fellow came and just came over and smacked my nose.

How many people would have been involved in this party here now for I have to describe it just as bluntly as this right. There was a group of Catholic people coming down from Thomas Street and there is a group of Protestants coming up from the bottom end of the town. How many would you say there were in the Catholic group.

BRIDGETT

I didn't actually see, the first thing well I didn't actually see it starting, I don't know how many there were at the start. When I looked round there was a good crowd that I didn't recognise like, but I didn't have time to look because I got punched and got off side.

You got off side straight away, did you.

BRIDGETT

I went round and got punched and I run. I run from their way up past them.

How long would it have been from you were talking to the police at the landrover until you got punched.

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BRIDGETT A lock of seconds.

You didn't say about then.

BRIDGETT No I just went up the town.

And you say you were on your own at that stage.

BRIDGETT Hm well after I got punched.

Yes. What time were you home at.

BRIDGETT I can't remember at all. I just went into the house and went to bed. You don't look at the clock when I get into the house like and I don't have a watch.

Was it daylight when you got home.

BRIDGETT No.

It was still darkness.

BRIDGETT Yes.

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Did you at any stage see anybody lying on the road, did you.

BRIDGETT

No I just seen the digs being threw like you know. People were just fighting with each other and it was a big free for all.

Right you seen the digs being thrown. Who did you see throwing them.

BRIDGETT

Catholics and Protestants.

Was this in progress as you were making your way up the street or did it.

BRIDGETT

No because I talked to police first and then there was nothing going on in the town like. Just me and Dean talking to the police and then I couldn't see the boy coming over to the landrover. He just came over. He started to slabber are you going to let them ones do this and do that and then I ducked round and a big scuffle started.

So as you were walking up from the bus to Kentucky Fried Chicken everything was alright

at that stage.

BRIDGETT Well from what I seen aye I didn't see nobody fighting.

What side of the street did you walk up.

BRIDGETT It was the Woodhouse Street side because I had went to Heron's. I was going to get something to eat but I didn't bother I just came up the town.

And the two of you walked up. Was there anybody in front of you.

BRIDGETT Not that I seen.

Did you notice anybody behind you.

BRIDGETT No just as I say we just walked straight up.

Would you have been part of a group walking from the bus at that stage.

BRIDGETT No just me and Dean.

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Who else was on the bus from the Coach.

BRIDGETT I can't remember.

How often do you travel on it.

BRIDGETT Now and again.

Well how often would that be.

BRIDGETT Once every couple of weeks maybe.

But sure there'd be, that's a bus coming to Portadown with people your age from Portadown and you are even every couple of weeks, you are bound to know who else at least some of them.

BRIDGETT These boys get taxis like, boys that go to the Belmont and stuff.

I know but I am talking about who was actually on the bus.

BRIDGETT Hm. Well on the way home on the bus I just sitting by myself, so I was.

Yeah well having said that, there is bound to be others on that bus whom you would have known from Portadown, in and around your age group.

BRIDGETT

No.

No. You didn't know anybody else on the bus.

BRIDGETT

No me and Dean and a couple of young girls that I know to see like, a couple of boys that I know to see, country boys like from Birches and where have you, there is some people from the town like.

So you are walking up from the coach, you don't know one single person, that you have never met one single person that you, have never met one single person that you knew that night.

BRIDGETT

No not personally.

Do you honestly, do you honestly expect us to believe that now Stacey, do you.

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BRIDGETT I don't know them personally, I know them to see, or what about you.

You have lived about Portadown for how long.

BRIDGETT All my life.

Nineteen years.

BRIDGETT Aye.

But you didn't recognise anybody by name or know anybody by name.

BRIDGETT I wasn't, I wasn't looking about. As I say I got on the bus, I was right at the front of the bus. I was just sitting, I was tired like.

Yes but you are walking up the street here, and you see you are able to describe this man coming over to the door of the police landrover. He was fairly upset obviously about events that are going on behind him. You were able to describe him. How did you

know that it was Protestants and Catholics that were, that were scuffling. How did you know that.

BRIDGETT Because, eh well I seen like there were boys walking up to Marks Church. They must have been walking home too. I don't know where they live and whenever I was getting off side they were coming down and I seen a couple of boys coming down from Saint, I think it must have been St Paddy's Hall. You know they were just coming down the Thomas Street area.

You seen them coming down the street.

BRIDGETT Well I just you know glanced and they were just coming down from it. I didn't have time to really look.

Who were those people then that you met.

BRIDGETT What people.

When you said St Marks Church there.

BRIDGETT Aye, no them people were running down so they

were.

Coming down from the Church direction.

BRIDGETT Yes.

Who were they.

BRIDGETT I was standing with my nose down, letting my nose bleed.

You didn't know them, did you.

BRIDGETT No.

Eh.

BRIDGETT No it seemed like a crowd and there was all scuffles. There was just too much confusion going on.

What did this guy do when he hit you. Did he just run off or did he just stand there or.

BRIDGETT Well he just drew big boy and it was followed by smacking me on the nose then I just run

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away from him, I didn't look to see where he went to. I just run up the town. I knew my nose was going to bleed because the slightest dig on my nose would make me bleed. I get, I get nose bleeds now and again. I just went up the town and let my nose bleed.

And you had no thoughts about getting your own back on anybody for getting a dig on the nose.

BRIDGETT No he was too big for me to hit, I'm not a fighter like.

You are not a fighter.

BRIDGETT No I'm not. I don't want to be a fighter.

Have never been in a fight before or any sort of bother.

BRIDGETT No, a fight.

Yes.

BRIDGETT Probably primary school or something, I mean I don't go round looking fighting.

Have never been in trouble for that sort of thing before now.

BRIDGETT Fighting, No.

You see the policemen or the police personnel who were on duty in that vehicle, some of them as you know know you by name but their version of events in relation to you coming up the street are somewhat different to what you say.

BRIDGETT Inaudible.

They say that there was a man actually been speaking to them in the landrover and that as he left the landrover to go off in the direction of Woodhouse Street, you and your friend came up and approached him in a threatening manner.

BRIDGETT No.

They clearly see that. They know you.

BRIDGETT No they must be mistaken well. I didn't

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approach anybody in a threatening manner.

At by that stage and that's before even there was any fight taking place.

BRIDGETT There was a man there.

There was a man there according to the police. Another man there according to the police as well.

BRIDGETT Aye that was before it started.

Who opened the door of the landrover and had a conversation with them.

BRIDGETT Well I don't know I just seen him sort of walking and he said I don't want no trouble and I says neither do I and he walked up Woodhouse Street. And that was that there he said, that's the words he said to him. He says look boys I am not looking any trouble and I says I am not looking any trouble either. You're not going to just go up and start on anybody.

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Why would he just out of the blue say 'look boys I don't want any trouble'.

BRIDGETT He maybe thought we were going to start on him, but we weren't like, no way.

Well you see he says that remark and yet the police in the landrover say that you approached that man in a threatening manner.

BRIDGETT Well what you call a threatening manner.

You walk up aggressively to a person.

BRIDGETT I don't think it, I was just walking up the street.

Well it would make sense the fact that he turns round and says 'look boys I don't want trouble' I mean.

Well it is obviously a serious.

SOLICITOR Well I wouldn't say that to somebody unless you know I felt they were going to give me trouble or grief.

BRIDGETT I was drunk, no I definitely wasn't going to start on him, you never start on anybody for nothing. I don't start, on anybody full stop.

Well you see Stacey I suspect that we are not getting the full truth here in relation to this.

BRIDGETT You are getting the full truth.

We are getting parts of it.

BRIDGETT No.

So we are.

BRIDGETT No that's the full truth.

In fact what you say is very much an edited version of what actually happened.

BRIDGETT No.

You didn't get off side immediately.

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BRIDGETT I did. Well I went up the town, to let the nose bleed and then we were standing.

We know that you got your nose bled, we knew that.

BRIDGETT I didn't know that you knew that.

I'm telling you now that we already knew right because enquiries that have been made to date have told us that. There was a fight there, two people have been injured, one of them seriously injured, the other one not so seriously injured. I am not saying to you that you were the prime mover that started this. Once that fight developed you become caught up in it.

BRIDGETT No the only way I got caught up in it was when we went to go away and I got smacked.

There is no reason for you to get a box on the nose just if you were standing at the back of the police landrover without reason. Like I mean, basically we have a group, a smaller group of Catholic people coming down Thomas

Street and a larger number of Protestant people coming or on the area of the main street. You wouldn't need to be a great mathematician Stacey to work out that the start a situation that they are not going to be able to finish or deal with.

BRIDGETT

No.

And there is no reason why you should just get a bat on the nose for nothing.

BRIDGETT

But sure you said I was going to bat another man on the nose for nothing. There was no reason. You said it to me earlier on.

That's supported by what you have said in relation to what that man was supposed to have said to you.

BRIDGETT

I am not going to hit a man for nothing.

And it was also by what the policemen on duty, how they have described your movements that night.

BRIDGETT You have turned round and you've said to me why would he hit you on the nose for nothing, why would I go up and start on a Catholic man for nothing.

The fact is that we have two people here, one of them who was very seriously assaulted.

BRIDGETT Well I had nothing to do with it. I don't, I am not a fighter and I believe that it was wrong what happened to him.

Who could tell us what time you were in the house at that night at.

BRIDGETT My mother. My ma usually hears me coming in. Sometimes she doesn't hear me but most of the times she does like.

You didn't recognise anybody who was there that night. You didn't know anybody.

BRIDGETT I recognised a few boys but nobody by name.

You say that once you got hit on the nose, that your main concern was your nose and you

weren't really looking up and you didn't see anything much after that.

BRIDGETT

When I got punched on the nose, I just went round the back of the landrover and then smack and I looked at the man, he was just a small and stocky fellow and then I sort of looked and I seen scuffling so I just went straight up.

Obviously when you get a skite on the nose, you are momentarily stunned or whatever and it takes a few seconds to get a sort of your wits back again or whatever but I don't believe for one second that you hightailed out of it at that stage.

BRIDGETT

Well that's true, you can only believe what you want to believe. I am telling the story how I seen it.

I mean the natural thing in most cases there would be, you would be annoyed and would want to get stuck in. You would be looking to get retribution or a dig back at somebody.

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BRIDGETT Well he was a grown man like.

Well a dig at anybody. I mean as far as you are concerned there was maybe a group of people.

BRIDGETT As I said I am not a fighter.

And in the whole melee you took it upon yourself along with whoever to go and have a bit of mix as well.

BRIDGETT No definitely not.

And then the result of the whole thing is that there's a man seriously ill in hospital.

BRIDGETT Well that had nothing to do with me.

He is still in hospital seriously ill.

He didn't agree with the other person injured albeit not as seriously but still, still injured as a result of it.

BRIDGETT Well it is not my problem because I had

nothing to do with it. I got off side.

And you say you saw the scuffles starting and that was all, you didn't see anybody going down or who was punching who or anything else.

BRIDGETT I seen people just throwing digs, that was it.

The street lighting is quite good there, you could identify people. I mean even at a glance if you look over and see a scuffle, the first thing that would come into your head is there's whoever and there's whoever in the middle of that.

BRIDGETT I don't know the boys by name, a few boys to see like.

You know them to see.

BRIDGETT Yes.

Who's that, the boys that were fighting.

BRIDGETT Aye.

Were these boys at the Coach.

BRIDGETT

Yes a couple. You see there was boys who came down, there was a rake of boys drinking in the town, they came down, people come down to meet the Coach bus and stuff. Just old winos and stuff.

Yes but what you are saying is that people who travelled back on the bus from the Coach, you seen fighting as well, but you don't know their names.

BRIDGETT

A couple, but I don't know their names.

From Portadown

BRIDGETT

They are country boys like, from the outskirts like, [REDACTED] and stuff. They get the bus and maybe get a taxi home. All the boys go out with that night, I didn't go out with them that night.

So you are saying that your company for that night was.

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BRIDGETT I was with Dean and there was a lot of other and there was a couple of young girls we were talking to, because when I was in the Coach I wasn't really with Dee, because I remember like.

Sorry, when you were in the Coach what.

BRIDGETT I wasn't with Dean much like, not that I can remember like. I was talking to some young girls as you do like.

And were you talking to anybody else in the Coach, apart from the young girls.

BRIDGETT No just drinking and chatting up women.

Okay then is there anything at this stage that you want to say.

BRIDGETT No.

Right okay then. The time is 1103. Right it is 1103 and I am serving PACE Form 21 again, that is a notice about your interview tape recording and how you or your solicitor can

have excess to the tapes and copies of them
alright.

BRIDGETT

Inaudible.

Would you just sign that form there Stacey
please to acknowledge receipt of the form.

SOLICITOR

That's alright to sign.

Just sign there please.

The time is now 1105 and the interview is
terminated.