

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

STATEMENT OF ALAN KEITH NEILL

AGE OF WITNESS [If over 21 enter 'over 21'] : OVER 21

I declare that this statement consisting of 5 pages, each signed by me is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence at a preliminary enquiry or at the trial of any person, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Dated this 27 day of April 1997

GEORGE LAWTHOR
SIGNATURE OF MEMBER

by whom statement was recorded or received

A K NEILL
SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

I am a Constable in the Royal Ulster Constabulary stationed at Portadown RUC Station. On 27 April 1997 at 0010 hours I was detailed JD81, a landrover crew along with Reserve Constables Cornett, Atkinson and P40. Our duties were public order in the town centre. At approximately 0140 hours we were parked in Market Street when I observed approximately 50 persons coming up High Street towards Market Street/Woodhouse Street/Thomas Street on the Thomas Street side of High Street. Some of these had already cleared the junction and I decided to have a look down towards Boss Hoggs. As I moved from Market Street into High Street a male approx mid 30s crossed the road in front of us mouthing something. R/Con Cornett opened her door and the male said, "There's a crowd coming down Thomas Street from St Pats." At this time I was aware of 2 youths coming from the Halifax. They approached the male who had spoken to us in the mouth of Woodhouse Street. One I know as Stacey Bridget was face to face with the male. This had been unprovoked. R/Const Cornett shouted out at Stacey and the other youth who then walked off. The male then proceeded down Woodhouse Street and the youths came over and spoke to R/Const Cornett. I noted that Stacey had a bottle of cider in his hand which I believe

STATEMENT OF ALAN KEITH NEILL

was 'Olde English'. I am not aware of the other youth's name but know him to see. He is 5'9", thin with short brown hair. He made the remark that he was a painter and that he had given his name to the owner of the Coach Inn in hope of a job at the Seagoe Hotel. At this time my door was opened and a male, approximately mid 30s, started pulling at me. At this time the landrover was stationary at Woodhouse Street across the Give Way lines with the nose of it pointing inwards. This male was wearing a blue/green casual shirt with short hair and was stocky build. As he was pulling at me he said, "You sat there and watched that happen." I was not aware at this time what he was talking about, at the same time there was a lot of shouting from behind. I got out of the landrover and observed what appeared more to cat calling than anything at the end of Thomas Street. I would say there was approximately 8 - 10 persons, male and female, who appeared to come from Thomas Street trying to make their way across into Woodhouse Street and approximately 30 or more taunting and getting on. A free for all then started in a matter of seconds in Market Street. There were a number of fights going on. I observed one outside Eastwoods Clothes Shop where there appeared to be 3 on one. I then made for this. I am not aware of who they were. I managed to separate these persons and removed one to safety to Woodhouse Street. This male was in his 20s and was wearing a white/cream type leisure top with a short zip at the throat. As I was in Woodhouse Street with this person another male came from behind me and punched this person in the face. I then grabbed this male and took him to the landrover. He would not give me his name but he was late teens, early 20s, black hair. There

STATEMENT OF ALAN KEITH NEILL

was then another fight started near me. R/Const. Cornett was at the side of the landrover. I separated this fight. We were still awaiting back-up to arrive at this time and I observed R/Con Atkinson and P40 in Market Street. It was at or about this time that I became aware of 2 persons lying in Market Street outside Eastwoods and the other more at the mouth of Thomas Street. There was a couple of women tending to them. I went over to them, both appeared unconscious. The male outside Eastwoods was breathing, rasping and was lying in a pool which I immediately believed to be blood and checked this person but could not see any cuts. I then remembered having seen a bottle smashed in this area. I then realised that it was alcohol on the ground and that I seen a male, early 20s, going to lift a piece of glass. This was not the same person who was lying on the ground. He had been coming from the Church side towards the glass going to lift a piece and a person, who I believe was the injured male, running at him. I am not sure where I was or at what stage this was in the whole event. I had spoken to R/Con Cornett and told her to get an ambulance and then tried to assist in getting the crowd back up the street. During this a male, late 20s, round face with goat beard and very short hair, wearing a leather type soft casual waistcoat, was near me and I saw him kick at the injured man I now know as Robert Hamill. The male with the goat beard was moved back as best possible. Other police had arrived at this stage and were standing with Rory Robinson, 20s, short black hair, thin with pointy features. Both these persons were taunting injured people and those that were looking after them. Robinson was moving back and forward across the line trying to get through. I became aware

STATEMENT OF ALAN KEITH NEILL

of A [REDACTED] having words with a male and went to assist her. This person was wearing a scarf pulled up over his face and a tracksuit type top on. I now know this person as Wayne Lunt. He was taken back to the landrover by myself and A [REDACTED]. After this I saw Stacey Bridget with blood around his mouth. I again assisted at the line trying to move the crowd back up towards West Street. Robinson was still in the front line and squared up to me on a couple of occasions when asked to move back, drawing his arms behind him. I also saw P51 [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] in this crowd wearing a soft denim type jacket and jeans, he appeared to be injured. The situation calmed down somewhat after this. I remember during this, a particular group of people I believe R/Cons Atkinson was involved and the male with the goat beard and the leather waistcoat was involved, he was involved in assaulting someone in the group. I tried to get this person off and I had to strike him with my baton. I believe I struck him on the leg. This had occurred during the main fracas but I am not sure exactly when in that. From start to when the ambulance left I would say was half an hour.

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

A K NEILL

CHECKED AND CERTIFIED A TRUE COPY OF THE ORIGINAL SIGNED

Derek Bradley

NOTES OF CONSTABLE ALAN NEILL

Parked in Market Street at opposite A/L and the 1st Trust facing down towards Woodhouse Street junction. 50 persons scattered and straggled coming up from Bridge Street on Thomas Street side. Constant flow of these people. Some of these had cleared Thomas Street junction and gone to Market Street just past Thomas Street still on Thomas Street side. Constable Neill driving and then moved out driving the landrover. Didn't get driving only to Woodhouse Street junction at corner of A/L when a fellow walked across from Thomas Street towards Woodhouse Street. He was alone and was mouthing. Couldn't hear what was being mouthed but stopped landrover. Constable Cornett opened door as male crossed in front of landrover. Constable Cornett spoke to this male. Said there was a crowd coming down Thomas Street from St Pats. He didn't say how many in the crowd. Neill didn't see a crowd coming down Thomas Street at that stage. This male turned and walked into Woodhouse Street. This male was in mid 30s. Saw 2 youths coming from Halifax. Landrover just moving off from corner of A/L. Male who spoke to driver about 20 feet into Woodhouse Street. Landrover went to give way lines in Woodhouse Street and stopped. Driver opened the door and said something to one of the 2 males. One of these 2 males was Stacey Bridgett. Then Stacey said something to the male in Woodhouse Street. I didn't know what it was said. Stacey and this male faced up to each other down in Woodhouse Street. It was just face to face and verbal. Don't know what was said. All from the landrover which was then parked very slightly down into Woodhouse

Street. The other youth with Stacey was standing down in Woodhouse Street but not taking part in verbal. Cornett said something to both who were facing each other and the male then walked into Woodhouse Street. Stacey Bridgett and the other male walked over to the front door of A/L and then came back to us. Stacey was standing just inside the open passenger door of landrover. The other male was standing at side of door. Noticed Stacey carrying a bottle of cider drink, it was Old English. Carrying it by the neck but not in a threatening manner. Don't know if he had it in his hand when talking to male in Woodhouse Street. Don't know other youth but 5'9", thin with short brown hair, made a remark. He was painter and had given his name to the owner of the Coach Inn in hope of a job at the Seagoe Hotel. At that point the male opened driver's door and started pulling at me. He pulled at my coat and tried pulling me out of the landrover. He shouted at us "You sit there and watched that happen." I did not know what he meant by that remark as up to that moment they didn't see anything happening. That male was mid 30s stocky build, not very tall, wearing a blue, grey casual shirt and had short hair. At that time I tried to get out of the landrover and the personnel got out. I got out to see what was happening and also because I was being pulled out by the arm. As I was getting out I became aware of cat calling and shouting from behind. That is between junction of Thomas Street direction. I don't know the words of the cat calling. I could see there was about 30 or more taunting. There appeared to be about 8 or 10 people in amongst this crowd of 30 and there was pushing and shoving taking place between each of these groups. There was general cat calling with

words like fenians and prods being used. That took place at the junction of Thomas Street to the central reservations. These 30 or so crowd were male, I can't say if there was female in that group. The 8 or 10 were male and female. They seemed to generally pushing about with no actual fighting going on. Someone out of the two groups took a dart at the opposite group. I can't say which group this person darted from. There were at about 3 or 4 fights going on after the person darted at the opposite group. Those fights were taking place in that same area and moved slightly up a couple of yards at the Market Street. The fights were between smaller groups of people who had broken out of the groups of 30 and 8 to 10 people. At that stage I heard at least 2 people shouting to get an ambulance. I don't know who those 2 were. I couldn't see anyone injured at that stage to require an ambulance. There was a fight outside Eastwoods where there was either two on one or maybe three on one. There was three prods on one Catholic. I made for the fight and managed to separate that fight. I pulled a fellow from that group and pulled him to Woodhouse Street for safety. I knew he was a Catholic because of what was being said in that particular fight. I didn't know that fellow and I didn't know the fellows who were fighting him. The one I removed was in his 20s wearing a white cream top like a sweater leisure type top with a short zip at throat. I put him in Woodhouse Street at the side of A/L. As I got into this spot another person came from behind and punched this person in the face. Grabbed that male and let the other go. Got him over to A/L. Then took him to landrover for the assault on the other male. Took him to side of landrover on passengers door

side. A fight started around me. I think it may have been the fellow who I pushed into Woodhouse Street may have come up out of Woodhouse Street. R/Con Cornett was at the side of landrover. The fight which started around me at this stage was amongst only a couple. It wasn't actually between the fellow I had in the landrover but seemed to be between a couple of others. The fellow I had at the door was late teens, early 20s, black hair, medium length. I separated the fight which had just taken place around me and in doing so let go of the fellow I had at the door. That fellow I had at the door was a Protestant and I know that from the way he was reacting. I was requiring assistance and I saw R/Cons Atkinson and P40 in Market Street up from the junction of Thomas Street. They were trying to separate fights which were going on all around them. Those fights were between different groups of people and not one concentrated group against another concentrated group. About that time there was something like a bottle smashed at the landrover. I looked up the street and saw a bottle being smashed outside Eastwoods on the road. I didn't see who threw but I saw it smashing on the ground. I saw a fellow going to pick up the large piece of glass which was smashed. I don't know who that fellow was. I saw the fellow running towards the first fellow. I now believed that fellow who was running towards the one who was picking up the smashed glass to be Hamill who was injured. I was also trying to watch P40 and R/Constable Atkinson who were trying to separate the fighting and to check if they were in any difficulty. They were in the middle of the road at the junction of Thomas Street trying to separate fights. I then became aware of

two males lying on the ground at the junction of Market Street and Thomas Street. One was lying at the mouth of Thomas Street on the left corner as you come down Thomas Street. I now know him to be D. He appeared unconscious. Another male was lying in the middle of the road outside Eastwoods in Market Street on the road on Thomas Street side. This was in the same area where I saw the bottle being smashed on the ground. I went over to him and I now know him to be Robert Hamill. I saw two women attending the injured males by running between both. The male outside Eastwoods was breathing and rasping and lying in a pool which I believed at that time to be blood. I later discovered that it was not blood and I realised that it was alcohol. I can't describe the 2 females. They were shouting for the ambulance and shouting at Police for doing nothing. The male who tried to pick the glass up was early 20s and he came from the Church side when he was going to pick the glass up. I would have taken him to be a Protestant because of the direction from which he came.