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Robert Hamill inquiry: Teen said he put the boot in, hearing told

Friday, 30 January 2009

A witness to the murder of Robert Hamill told policemen who were visiting his father's home that he "put the boot in" the night the 25-year-old was killed, the Hamill inquiry heard yesterday.

The inquiry was told that teenager Timothy Jameson had previously denied seeing the assault in Portadown |centre in the early hours of April 27, 1997.

The attack, during a confrontation between Protestant and Catholic gangs, was |carried out in view of a Land Rover in which four RUC |officers were sitting.

Retired RUC detective Edward Honeyford said he was ordered to interview teenager Timothy Jameson as a matter of urgency for the second time on May 9, 1997.

He had already carried out a short interview two days after the attack — but Mr Honeyford said he was not told the exact reasons why the interview was to be carried out so urgently.

The inquiry was shown an extract from a statement by Witness G — an officer whose anonymity is being protected — who described being at the house of Mr Jameson's father Bobby, who did contract work for police, on May 9.

Witness G's draft statement said that Mr Jameson told them he knew more than he had said in his first statement and that he had "put the boot in".

"Timothy Jameson was quite calm and matter of fact when he told us about that," Witness G's statement read.

"He didn't appear to be frivolous or bragging — he seemed to be serious.

"He was fully aware we were police officers and probably knew that we would report it.

"I am certain that Timothy Jameson did state that he had "put the boot in" to to us."

Mr Honeyford, who left the police in 2002, said he had not been aware at the time of the nature of the information which had reached the officers. Had he known that there was a chance Mr Jameson was involved, he would have carried out the interview with him as a suspect and under caution.

But Mr Jameson eventually withdrew his statement and said the detective had "put words in his mouth", which Mr Honeyford denied.

Jonathan Wright claimed in a statement, which was shown to the inquiry, that Mr Honeyford threatened him in an interview, telling him he would not be able go on holiday with his girlfriend and that his father, a clergyman, would be humiliated by his son's name being linked to the case.

These allegations were "totally wrong," Mr Honeyford said.

"I couldn't tell that to a |witness. There would be |absolutely no point. If his father worked for the Church of Ireland, that's the first I heard of it."

Mr Honeyford is to resume evidence today.

At hearing.

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