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Man charged in Hamill murder was involved in Drumcree dispute

By Emily Moulton Wednesday, 25 February 2009

One of the men charged with the murder of Robert Hamill had been arrested for singing sectarian songs about Bobby Sands seven weeks before the Portadown man was killed, an inquiry into his death heard yesterday.

Wayne David Lunt had also been convicted of riotous behaviour during the Drumcree dispute in 1995 and was also convicted of disorderly behaviour and assaulting a police officer six months after the father-of-three was kicked to death in Portadown on April 27, 1997.

Mr Lunt was one of five people charged in connection with Mr Hamill's murder, however the charges were later dropped.

During the hearing at the Interpoint Centre in Belfast yesterday, the inquiry was told Mr Lunt, who maintained throughout the sitting that he could not remember most of the events from that fatal night 12 years ago, had been arrested by police on March 3, 1997 for singing sectarian songs about Bobby Sands.

When asked by barrister Barra McGrory, who is representing the Hamill family, if he could remember being arrested for this offence, the witness said: "I don't remember that at all."

It also emerged during the hearing Mr Lunt had been arrested during the Drumcree dispute.

When questioned if he could remember this, he replied he could not.

The witness also told the hearing that on the night Mr Hamill was murdered, he had consumed a bottle of Buckfast at a friend's house and was on his second bottle when he had gone into the town to "see what was going on".

He claimed he could not remember most of what happened during the early hours of April 27, 1997 and denied being one of the men who kicked Mr Hamill to death.

Mr Lunt also testified that he had been carrying a bottle as he walked into the town but denied it was being held like a weapon and denied the suggestion that he had been arrested by a female police officer because he had held the bottle in a menacing way.

At hearing.

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