

THE BLOODY SUNDAY INQUIRY

I, John Roddy of

will say that:

1. I did not attend the march on Bloody Sunday but I have evidence which is significant in the light of the shootings that took place on that day.
2. At the time, I was employed by the Old City Dairy as a helper on a milk float which delivered to the Ebrington barracks in the Waterside. It was a full time job and my role was to assist the driver of the float with milk deliveries. In the time leading up to Bloody Sunday, the driver of the float on which I worked was Eddie Gillespie. I was learning the ropes from Eddie who was leaving and whose job I was eventually to take over.
3. The Ebrington barracks housed British soldiers and our job was to deliver the milk to the NAAFI (the canteen) in the barracks. We would leave the Old City Dairy depot on the Letterkenny Road shortly after 6.00 am and, after making other deliveries, would arrive at the Ebrington barracks around 8.30 am. We would pass through security at the barracks' gates and drive around to the NAAFI.
4. During the period that we delivered milk to the Ebrington barracks, Eddie and I got to know a black soldier who was stationed there reasonably well. I cannot recall his name and I am not sure what rank he was. I think he was a sergeant but I never saw him in his full uniform. We always saw him in the morning and he was most commonly dressed in combat trousers and a black t-shirt. He seemed to me then to be a tall man but he was probably no more than 6 feet. He had short hair. Although I am not certain of his rank, I however believe that he was a soldier of some authority and had men under his command. I do not know what regiment he was in; it may have been a Scottish regiment although he had an English accent.
5. We came to know the soldier first by sight; we exchanged "good mornings" as Eddie and I delivered milk. One morning, about three months before Bloody Sunday, he asked whether we wanted to have breakfast in the NAAFI. We initially said no, but he said that it would be fine. I was certainly not going to turn down a free breakfast and we went into the NAAFI with him.
6. After that, on the mornings he saw us delivering milk, he would invite us into the NAAFI. We did not see him every single morning but I would say most mornings. He always queued up with us to be served breakfast and we never had any difficulty from the other soldiers. Sometimes, he would sit with Eddie and me but most of the time we sat by ourselves.
7. We knew the black soldier was in a position of some authority because he once told us, when we were having breakfast with him, that at Christmas he served or made his men Christmas dinner. It was, apparently, a gesture of some sort.
8. The other incident which confirmed his authority occurred about two or three weeks before Bloody Sunday. Eddie and I had arrived at the Ebrington barracks as normal. As we made our milk delivery, he came over to the float and told us that we could not have

breakfast in the NAAFI that morning. He said that one of his men had been shot dead the previous day and the others would not take to kindly to our presence. I think I had heard on the radio, before I started the deliveries that morning, that a soldier had been killed in Stanley's Walk by an IRA sniper. Although Eddie and I did not have breakfast that morning, the soldier invited us in the next time he saw us making a delivery.

9. It was this black soldier who warned us not to go on the Bloody Sunday march. He gave us the warning some time during the week leading up to the march. I cannot recall whether he gave the warning to both Eddie and me or whether he spoke only to me. Again, the conversation took place in the early morning during our milk delivery. The soldier asked me whether I knew anyone in the Republican movement. My initial thought was that he suspected that I was in the Republican movement and that he was going to arrest me there and then. I denied any involvement in the Republican movement or knowledge of anyone in it. He then went on to say that the Parachute Regiment had arrived in the Ebrington barracks and there had been scuffles during the previous night between them and the men from his regiment. He said that if I knew anyone in the Republican movement who had any control of the march on that Sunday (that is the Sunday following our conversation), then I should get word to them that it should not go ahead because the paratroopers "were coming in and meant to do serious damage and even kill people".
10. I knew of the paratroopers by reputation and experience. One morning, some days before I received the warning, I had been frisked very aggressively by paratroopers on the corner of Westland Street and Lone Moor Road. I was on my way to work and the paratroopers were at the second checkpoint I encountered. The first checkpoint I encountered was further north on Westland Street and was manned by regular soldiers. The regular soldiers, whose regiment I do not recall, stopped and searched me and asked where I was going. I told them and they replied "watch yourself, there's a different regiment down there". The paratroopers that I met "down there" threw me up against a wall by the side of the road. They were definitely more aggressive than the soldiers I had encountered earlier. I also knew that the paratroopers were meant to be a tough regiment made up of very fit and well-built men.
11. I don't remember discussing the warning the black soldier gave at the Ebrington barracks with anyone other than Eddie, although I may very well have done. I remember saying to Eddie something along the lines of "how the fuck are we going to tell people not to go on the march". It was not common knowledge that the Old City Dairy delivered milk to the Ebrington barracks. It was not the sort of information that you wanted to be widespread. I was certainly not going to tell anyone that I regularly had breakfast there and was friendly with a British soldier.
12. On Bloody Sunday itself, I did a delivery run to commercial customers of the Old City Dairy in the morning. I was driving the milk float that day and my helper was Jim Stewart. We arrived back in Derry at about 2:00 pm after completing our deliveries in Strabane and had use of the float until 4.00 pm when we were due to return it to the proprietors of the Old City Dairy. The word around on Bloody Sunday was that the paratroopers would raid Creggan as soon as the march started. We decided to drive the float around the Bogside and Creggan to see if anything would happen. We were being nosy. I remember seeing paratroopers on Infirmity Road. ^{an} They had set up a ^{base} ~~base~~ and I presumed that it had been set up to stop marchers ^{coming up that road from} ~~coming up that road from~~ William Street. I could recognise these soldiers as paratroopers as they were wearing their

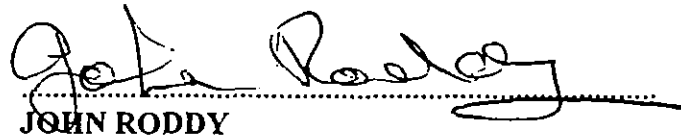
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GOING OVER THAT ROAD.
TO WILLIAM ST John

distinctive light yellowy-green desert camouflage and red berets.

13. I then went back home to via Rosemount and I did not take any part in the march.
14. At around 4.00 pm, Jim Stewart and I decided to take the float back to its owners. We decided to have another nose around on our way there and drove down to the Bogside to see what was happening on the march. We drove south down Westland Street and had just reached its junction with Lecky Road when we heard and saw between 300 and 350 people running towards us from the direction of Free Derry Corner. They were shouting that the army were shooting and we should get "the fuck out of the road". We loaded as many as we could onto the float and took them back up to Creggan. I did not return to the Bogside on that day.
15. I did not make any milk deliveries to the Ebrington barracks after Bloody Sunday. My recollection was that all deliveries to the barracks stopped but I don't know whether it was the army which cancelled its contract or whether the dairy company simply refused to deliver.
16. I confirm that I was a personal friend of John Young who was shot dead on Bloody Sunday.

Signed:


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JOHN RODDY

Dated:

22 Nov 1998
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